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INDEPENDENCY
IN
BRISTOL.



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INDEPENDENCY IN BRISTOL:

WITH

BRIEF MEMORIALS

OF ITS

CHURCHES AND PASTORS.

BY

REV. M. CASTON.

"Tell ye your children of it; and let your children tell their children; and their children another generation."

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

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P R E F A C E.

THE Compiler of the following Memorials has felt a sacred pleasure in gathering up the fragments that remain of the History of the Independent Churches in Bristol. He acknowledges, with gratitude, his obligations to the various Friends and Brethren who have assisted him in the work; particularly to the present Pastors of the Churches, and several of the Deacons, who have kindly furnished him with documents in their possession, and favoured him with a sight of the Church Records for his inspection. His thanks are also due to the Senior Deacon of the Broad Mead Church, for the perusal of a valuable Manuscript History of that venerable Society, written with great care by himself, but never published. Also to another Friend, for the use of a similar document relative to the different

Churches and Ministers in Bristol, composed by a departed relative of his, the late Mr. ISAAC JAMES, and in which some valuable particulars were found. In addition to these, he has made full use, as will be seen, of the "Broad Mead Records," published by the Hansard Knolly's Society : and has consulted also Mr. FULLER'S Narrative, as well as the brief Notices of Dissent in Bristol, preserved in the Library of the Baptist College. Besides these, he has examined the ancient and modern Histories of Bristol, but could obtain little from them : and searched the old City Library, in King Street, for what might possibly be found there in reference to the earlier Churches.

In regard to the modern ones, he has had from the lips, or the pen, of beloved and honoured Brethren, who were instrumental in forming them, the chief particulars : and as some of these are approaching the verge of life, and have reached the evening of their days, he has deemed it a special duty to gather from them, and record, what they only could relate, before they "go hence, and be no more."

Having now finished the work he had proposed to himself, and rendered each Article as correct and complete as

is in his power, he commends the whole to the Divine benediction ; and trusts these Annals of the Past will not be without their use in promoting the cause to which they are devoted, and in encouraging the hearts, and strengthening the hands, of those who are in any way occupied in promoting the spiritual interests of their fellow-creatures, and the kingdom of Christ in the world.

Should this end be attained, the Author will have his reward.

SYDENHAM HILL, BRISTOL,

JANUARY 2nd, 1860.



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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

“Remember the days of old.”

OBLIGATIONS TO THE PAST.—DISSENTERS IN BRISTOL.—SCANTINESS OF HISTORY.—CIVIC RECORDS.—RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.—PRESBYTERIANS.—BAPTISTS.—INDEPENDENTS.

To search into the past in reference to any cause which has been identified with the best interests of mankind, and to “remember the forgotten” who have been among the instruments employed by an all-wise and gracious Director for its promotion, whether by their sufferings or their labours, is one of the most interesting employments of the human mind, and one, too, peculiarly obligatory on those to whom are applicable, in no ordinary measure, the words of Incarnate Truth, “Other men have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours.”

If there be any individuals or communities in the present day to whom in an especial manner this scripture applies, and on whom it is particularly incumbent not to forget the past eventful circumstances of their history, or the honoured men to whose privations and sufferings they are so much

indebted, it is the Dissenters of Bristol, whose flourishing churches attest the vitality of their principles, and whose existence in this ancient Metropolis of the West has been a "blessing in it" for many generations. Few societies or individuals have more reason to be proud of their ancestry, —not with a worldly elation,—but with that honest satisfaction of which conscience approves, and that grateful delight which glorifies God in them. Dissent in Bristol has been a living reality, a glorious power, from days that are past to the present time : and no small service would be rendered to the cause of truth and to the honour of God our Saviour were it possible to retrace its history, to unfold its origin, and to mark the signal interpositions of Divine Providence in its progress from the ages of darkness and corruption to the more enlightened and favoured times in which we live, in a manner proportioned to the magnitude of its claims.

To accomplish this successfully, the Writer is conscious would require an amount of information, and a degree of historical talent, to which he does not pretend, as well as a knowledge of the facts and circumstances of the past, to which it is impossible in the present day to attain. The productions of reliable history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when party spirit was high, and factions, both in Church and State, were more loud and boisterous still, are scanty and few. One party was anxious to misrepresent or obscure what another suffered and did. The Puritans, who nobly strove against the corruptions and superstitions of the age, were, unhappily, though as might naturally be expected, not entirely agreed among themselves. The advocates of a purer worship and of practical

godliness were comparatively the few and feeble of the land; whilst the enemies of both occupied the high places of the earth, and looked with sovereign contempt on all who disputed their opinions, or would not bow to their sway. When, moreover, after the liberal rule of Cromwell, the High Church and Tory party came again into power, it was their policy, as well as their pleasure, to extinguish the lights that had been kindled, to depreciate the characters and labours of those who had preceded them, to destroy what remained of veritable narrative concerning them, and to ignore in their writings both the men and the things by which the cause of scriptural piety had been greatly promoted in the land. With this they had little sympathy: and, therefore, to throw into the shades its illustrious champions, or to deny, or excuse, the sufferings by which it had been impeded, was alike their interest and their paramount concern.

This more particularly applies to the city of Bristol. In examining the principal records of this renowned and ancient Corporation, the writer has been somewhat astonished to find how little is said of those remarkable persecutions and sufferings which characterized its history in the seventeenth century. Momentous and deeply interesting they were. In no place probably was the strife between the magnates in power and the humbler citizens—between the advocates of things as they were and as they ought to be—more sternly carried on. One might almost think it had been selected as one of the high places of the field for the trial of strength, and for the rage of the conflict between light and darkness, betwixt religion and superstition, betwixt the lovers of truth and the abettors of error. The Church gloried in its

corruptions. The State was its willing tool. Both acknowledged, without hesitation or concealment, the divine right of kings to govern wrong : and both determined with equal zeal to carry into effect a despotic monarch's commands. When the righteous were to be condemned, the wicked justified, and the peaceful citizen fined and tortured because he had ventured to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, the lordly Prelate and the obsequious Mayor sat side by side on the judgment seat, whilst their impious and sometimes intoxicated heralds were despatched to the house of worship, to seize upon the worshippers, and abruptly terminate the hallowed services in which they were employed. Many such instances occurred when James sat on the throne, and Knight was the sheriff of Bristol, and Olive the Mayor, and Hellier his unprincipled lawyer ; and yet little or no allusion to them is made. Some of the most nefarious acts of persecution which ever took place in England were perpetrated here, and yet they are, for the most part, passed by. Instances of the most heroic Christian endurance under them were exhibited, and yet the historians of Bristol seem willingly ignorant of them. Its civic grandeur, its commercial importance, the siege and defence of its celebrated castle, and even its charitable and benevolent institutions, are worthily remembered, but its struggles for conscience sake, its sufferings for truth's sake, and its invincible courage in contending for a purer faith and worship, yet want an adequate record. Happy and honoured will be the man who, with resources at his command, with the talent required, and with inclination for his work, shall devote himself to the labour of presenting these to the world.

Happier and brighter scenes, however, succeeded. The reign of despotism, secretly guided by the genius of Popery, ended. The Jameses and the Charleses were removed from the British throne, and an auspicious period was ushered in by the Revolution of 1688. William and Mary inaugurated a new era for the British Isles ; and darkness, superstition, and persecution, the birds of night, retire at the rising dawn. The Act of Toleration secured to British subjects, what no earthly power is competent to take away, liberty to worship God in a manner their consciences shall approve. And though it was a long period before this native right of man was fully recognised, yet did it gradually rise to ascendancy ; and under its benign influence, peace, and truth, and a purer religion advanced among us. Various congregations and communities of Protestant Dissenters arose in Bristol, as well as elsewhere ; not all agreed in minor matters, but, in the essentials of the gospel, and “things which accompany salvation,” substantially one. The Presbyterian, the Independent, and the Baptist, worshipped in different assemblies, but met at the foot of the same throne, gathered around the same cross, and agreed to walk by the same rule—the infallible Word of God. “*In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas,*” was the noble motto they professed to adopt and follow ; and among themselves, so long as neither of them was connected with the State, was it observed and exemplified. Each proceeded in its own line, claiming for itself, and yielding to others, the right and the liberty to regulate its communion by the rules which it judged to be most in accordance with the revealed will of God.

The Presbyterians were neither numerous nor strong in

Bristol. At least they never appear to have consisted of more than one congregation, which has some time since merged, in part, as was frequently the case with the English Presbyterians, first into the Arian, and then into the Socinian or Unitarian body. The Baptists, numerous, honoured, and useful in no small degree, continue to the present day, "known and read of all men," and have found worthy memorialists in the persons of Terrill, James, Fuller, and others, whose "records" are among the valuable writings of which the city of Bristol can boast. The Independents have scarcely found a historian yet; nor are their names, their sufferings, their labours, or their success, so far as the writer knows, anywhere adequately recorded. Among them were some of "the excellent of the earth." Their sufferings, in common with those of their Baptist brethren, were grievous, prolonged, and deeply interesting. Their prayers have come up "for a memorial" before the Lord of Hosts, and have been answered in refreshing showers on the city. Their labours have been crowned with large success: and the flourishing societies of this denomination in Bristol demonstrate how well the foundations were laid on which such goodly spiritual edifices could stand. Long and precious is the array of names their ministers furnish. Some of them have left a savour of peculiar fragrance behind; while the churches which they have fed and governed have been, and still are, as the salt of the earth, and light of the world.

It is to search out and record a little of the history of these that the author has taken up his pen. He laments that it has not been done before, and that it is not now attempted by an abler hand. He brings to it, however, a loving heart, and an admiring mind; and in proportion to

the extent of the resources which are at his command will he endeavour faithfully and affectionately to record something of the sufferings and labours of those devoted men who have fallen in "the good fight of faith," who have laboured for the "truth of Christ," and the welfare of immortal souls, and who, in conjunction with others, have bequeathed to Bristol and to the West of England, an imperishable inheritance of Christian worth, of sterling principle, of holy example, and useful exertions, for which successive generations are indebted to them, and which will be best acknowledged and improved by similar devotion, faith, and zeal in the service of Him whose cause they loved, whose word was their guide, and whose approbation was their reward.

CHAPTER II.

GLANCE AT THE TIMES.

"My kingdom is not of this world."

ELIZABETH.—PURITANS.—MARTYRS.—JAMES.—BOOK OF SPORTS.—
PERSECUTIONS.—EXILES.—LAUD.—CRISIS.—COMMONWEALTH.—
CROMWELL.—INDEPENDENTS.—THE RESTORATION.—ACT OF UNI-
FORMITY, ETC.—JAMES II.—SUFFERINGS OF NONCONFORMISTS.—
REVOLUTION.—TOLERATION.

THE seventeenth century, which perhaps was the most important that England had seen, opened after conflicts the most interesting, and amidst prospects the most portentous, the world had ever known. Elizabeth was as yet on the throne. The great men who figured in her reign, both in Church and State, had left an impression on the age not soon to be obliterated. The principles for which they had contended, and for which some of them had laid down their lives, were just beginning to grow up on a prolific soil, and to produce fruit in the English mind and character which, however unperceived by those in power, would be found after many days. No small amount of suffering had been endured, even under a Protestant government, for the preferences and habits which these principles had inspired, and

as in earlier times the blood of the martyrs had been the seed of the church, so now, the fines, imprisonments, and deaths inflicted on the Puritans, were but the means of imbedding their principles more deeply beneath the surface, and giving them a hold which should never be eradicated. "To the Puritans," says Hume, "are the British Constitution and people indebted for the preservation of the precious spark of liberty, when it was in danger of being extinguished ;" and nobly did these servants of the Most High God, and champions of mankind, vindicate the rights of humanity and truth in perilous times. Both in the Church, and out of it, they had suffered the loss of all things ; and amidst tears and groans laid the foundation of that fair fabric of religious and civil liberty which was in after years to arise.

Although Elizabeth, with the despotic and cruel tyranny which in things sacred characterised her reign, had sought to root out and destroy all separations from the Church of which she was the acknowledged head in these realms, the causes lay deeper than a human eye could perceive, and operated in a sphere over which human power had no control. "Consciences and souls were made to be the Lord's alone," and in vain did any earthly authority attempt to make them subject to its will. There is something in the nature of man, and especially in the human conscience, as if in vindication of its Maker's prerogative, which rises up in rebellion against every effort, from whatever source it come, that seeks to impose what in its own nature is indifferent, or what the will of God has not enjoined. Whether in doctrine, or in the practices of Divine worship, the attempt is sure to meet with opposition, to lead to

confusion, perhaps to entail much suffering, and certainly to end ultimately in merited defeat. Homage to the Eternal cannot be measured, regulated, or restrained by a human rule. It must rise in all its native ardour, as a "free-will offering" to the skies, adjusted only by the revealed will and infallible word of Him to whom it is given.

So thought the noble men of the sixteenth century, who had fought the glorious battles of the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland, France, and other countries of continental Europe; and what Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and Zuinglius, had contended for elsewhere, had now to be suffered for and secured on British ground—"Freedom to worship God." The conflict had already begun. The fire was already kindled; and fuel, to no small amount, was in this century to be added to the flames. The Marian martyrs had led the way. Worthy successors in later times had followed. And now, a long array of honourable men, "of whom the world was not worthy," was to swell the train. Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer, had suffered to the death in Mary's reign. Barrowe, Greenwood, and Penry, heroes not inferior to "the first three," had fallen on the scaffold in Elizabeth's; while thousands of faithful men, good and true, had been harassed by all kinds of severities for the love which they bore to the Saviour who redeemed them, and the solicitude which they felt for His honour among men. Imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and banishment from their native land, was the price they had to pay for the truths they believed, the principles they held dear, and the liberty which every child of Adam has a right to claim as his own.

When James ascended the British throne, in 1603, it was

amidst pretensions so great, and promises so fair, that hopes were entertained of a new and brighter era dawning upon these realms. Trained up in a land where Knox had laboured, and in which the crooked policy of Prelatic power had in vain attempted to lift up its head—imbued with the more enlightened principles of the Presbyterian church, and professing the utmost devotion to the Protestant cause—many had anticipated from him a more liberal and enlightened sway. Some indeed had regarded him as the “rising Sun,” after that “occidental star” which had lately disappeared, and, we presume, had accordingly calculated to bask in his rays, and to enjoy the mild effulgence which his reign would diffuse. But, alas! the horizon was soon overcast. The rays were few and far between; and the mild heat in which they had hoped to live, proved, to not a few, an almost consuming fire. More stringent laws were enacted in Church and State. The exiles were forbidden to return. The Book of Canons was adopted. Bancroft, a worthy successor of Whitgift, presided at Canterbury. The Presbyterian King and the mitred Lord were perfectly agreed; and persecutions, imprisonments, and banishment ensued.

But amidst the contentions of the times and the arbitrary measures of the Court, the seeds of truth and liberty, in various parts of the land, began to spring up, and some hopes of summer appeared. The fluctuating policy of James but confirmed the Puritans and Nonconformists in their principles; whilst the vices of his admirers, and the publication of the “Book of Sports,” deepened in the minds of many a conviction of the necessity of contending the more earnestly for “the faith once delivered to the saints.” Holy men of God, therefore, in different parts of the country,

were determined to buckle on the "armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," and to avow their attachment to principles and practices which they believed essential to the maintenance of the church of Christ in the land, however they might incur the wrath of the King. The illustrious Robinson, in Norfolk; Helwise, Jacob, and Johnson, elsewhere; and men of kindred minds in the metropolis, in the provinces, and in Wales, were diligent in "sowing beside all waters," and in vindicating the rights of Zion's King against every usurping power. The Puritans, both within and without the pale of the Establishment, agreed in this, whilst by the latter the "more excellent way" was pleaded for; separation from all human establishments in religion recommended; and congregational churches set up in various parts of the country. The consequence was as might be expected. The jealousy of the Government was aroused. Might was accounted right. The righteous were oppressed when the wicked were exalted, and walked on every side. The advocates of a purer system of faith and worship were cruelly treated by bigots in power, and not a few of them prepared to leave their native soil. Some of England's best sons were then compelled to flee beyond the seas, and in Holland, or in more distant climes, to seek a refuge on foreign shores. Then it was, in 1620, that the *Speedwell* and the *Mayflower* bore from England the noblest cargo that ever left her shores—"the Pilgrim Fathers"—to seek and find in the transatlantic forests a sanctuary to worship God, and for themselves and their children a place of habitation.

During the remainder of the reign of James, and under the first Charles's sway, things continued about as they

were, with no improvement in regard to the wisdom of the laws, or the policy of their administration. The prisons of England continued to be filled with victims for conscience sake, and both the civil and ecclesiastical power seemed to delight in harassing and tormenting those who, in the things of religion and of God, ventured to think for themselves. Laud, the infamous Archbishop of the times, being elevated to the highest dignity, and allowed to influence the measures of the court, invented new modes of oppression, and in the height of his infatuation kindled a flame in Scotland by attempting to impose Episcopacy on that sturdy and Presbyterian land. This, with other attempts at arbitrary power, the French alliances of the King, his well-known inclination to Popery, and his efforts to govern without Parliamentary counsel, and to establish irresponsible rule, awakened now some of the most lethargic in the kingdom to see whither the vessel of the State was drifting, and how best they could avoid, both in matters civil and sacred, the impending ruin. The note of alarm was sounded throughout the British Isles. The standard, not of revolt, but of opposition to illegal power, was raised, and in and out of Parliament, not a few rallied around its waving folds. The British Lion was fairly roused, not to devour, but to defend: and Hampden, Cromwell, Milton, Lord Brooke, Vane, and others, were the instruments which a gracious Providence employed to avenge their country's wrongs. The civil war followed. The Monarch forfeited his life as the penalty of violated laws. Cromwell rose to power; and the Commonwealth was established beneath his mighty rule.

Throughout the period of the Long Parliament which

preceded, and of the Protectorate which ensued, the condition of religious liberty in these lands, as might be expected, was ameliorated and improved. In the first, the King was unable to carry into effect his persecuting laws; and during the second, the "Chief of men" was for the most part sustained by individuals who, like himself, were advocates of human rights, and of general liberty in the worship of God. The clash of arms, and the onset of contending hosts, often interrupted the peaceful worship of the Most High, and exposed the worshippers to rude treatment from military hands. But there was no persecution by law. The Star Chamber and High Commission Courts were abolished. The prison doors were opened: and many of the oppressed went free. Cromwell sought to consolidate his rule by the admission of all parties, who were eligible, to power. Patriots were encouraged. Men of integrity, both in Church and State, occupied responsible places. Independents increased in all ranks of the community. In Parliament they were numerous. In the army they were strong. In the city some of them occupied the high places: and in all parts of society there began to be a general tendency in all the concerns of religion to "do unto others as they would be done unto." Then, in a subordinate sense might it be said, "the churches had rest, and walking in the fear of the Lord and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, were edified and multiplied." Baxter, Owen, and Howe, and such like men, were the ministers of the day. Vital godliness was in the ascendancy. Liberty and liberality increased: and a noble sum was cheerfully given by the different congregations of the land for supplying the necessities of the poor Piedmontese, who were

then suffering the most horrible persecutions for righteousness sake, the bones of whose ancestors, beneath the blood-thirsty triumphs of Rome,

“Lay scattered on the Alpine mountains cold.”

This auspicious state of things, however, did not continue long. In 1660 Charles the Second was reinstated on the throne of his fathers, and with him the civil and ecclesiastical policy of former reigns was restored. The position of the Independents, and of all who did not comply with the requisitions of an aspiring hierarchy, was soon the reverse of what it had recently been : and although the Declaration of Breda, “on the sacred word of a King,” had guaranteed liberty of conscience to all his subjects, it was soon manifest that “on the sacred word of a King” no man could rely. Episcopacy was established, with more than its rights, and more than its former power. The High Church party, both in Court and Parliament, prevailed ; and the result of it was the passing of the celebrated “Act of Uniformity,” in the year 1662, which, on the 24th of August, called “Bartholomew’s day,” “was fatal,” says the philosophic Locke, “to our Church and religion, in throwing out a very great number of worthy, learned, pious, and orthodox divines :” indeed, the best of the land, who far surpassed in literature, piety, and pulpit efficiency, most who were left behind. This was committing “Church robbery” with a witness ; and the necessary and natural consequences ensued. The Church of England was impoverished, and has felt the impoverishment ever since. The Nonconformists were multiplied, and though imprisonment, sufferings, and death awaited them, “they took joyfully the spoiling of

their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and more enduring substance." Remarkable providences are well authenticated concerning them. But the King, and the Court, and the Prelatical party, were more enraged against them. The "Conventicle," and "Five Mile Acts," with other stringent and harassing measures, were enacted, and unutterable were the sufferings which the persecuted Nonconformists had to endure. For twenty years their ministers and congregations suffered the most cruel vexations and losses which malignant ingenuity could inflict; till at length, the misguided Charles, untaught by his father's misfortunes, died, it is said, a Roman Catholic, in the full height of his arbitrary power; and his kingdom was divided, by bitter factions, almost in twain.

In 1685 James the Second ascended the throne. "His reign," says a competent writer, "divides itself into three epochs, each of which may be considered an act in the great drama of the Revolution. The first was the period in which he directed all the forces and agencies of the State towards the persecution of the Nonconformists. The second was the season in which he attempted, by hypocritical measures affecting liberty of conscience, to pave the way for the establishment of Popery. The third was the brief hour in which the detected conspirator against the liberties of the British people sought to cover his confusion and conceal his rage by acts of presumption and folly, which pushed him further into danger, until he lost crown and all." Innumerable were the acts of persecution perpetrated upon unoffending Dissenters, and insatiable the spirit of bigotry and hate that raged against them. The Metropolis and the provinces were filled with the victims of

episcopal malice or royal spleen. "Never," says Macaulay, "not even under the tyranny of Laud, had the condition of the Puritans been so deplorable as at this time. Spies were actively employed to detect their congregations. Magistrates, grand jurors, rectors, and churchwardens, were much on the alert. Many Dissenters were cited before the Ecclesiastical Courts. Others found it necessary to purchase the connivance of the officers of Government in the most costly way. The places of meeting were frequently changed. Worship was performed sometimes just before the break of day, sometimes at dead of night. Round the building where the little flock was gathered together, sentinels were posted to give alarm if a stranger drew nigh. Warrants were issued against multitudes; and on some distresses were levied to the amount of many thousands of pounds." Thus harassed, perplexed, imprisoned, and robbed, nothing but the power of principle, sustained from on high, could have upheld the Nonconformists of that day. The King sanctioned all, and would have attempted more, even to "harry them out of the land." But an invisible Hand restrained him, and ere long hurled him from the throne. The storm which he had raised spent its fury on his own devoted head. In the month of November, 1688, he vacated the throne, and wandered a vagabond in the earth, to return to the kingdom of his fathers no more. A righteous Ruler had said to the rising waters of human tyranny and misrule, "Hitherto shall ye come, but no further, and here shall your proud waves be stayed." He that sitteth in the heavens now laughed the enemies of His people to scorn, and introduced a new and a brighter era for Britain's

favoured Isles. William the Third, of grateful memory, was elevated to the throne. A revolution, the most peaceful and glorious the world ever saw, deposed the tyrant, and exalted the righteous in his stead. The reign of liberty began. Auspicious freedom smiled upon the land. The "Toleration Act," in May 1689, received the royal assent, and laid the foundation of all the immunities and privileges we enjoy at the present day. Imperfect as some of its provisions are, it claims to be regarded as the Magna Charta of our religious freedom; and has thrown a bulwark around our rightful inheritance which none of its adversaries have been able to remove.

This glance at the times of the seventeenth century will suffice to introduce the rise and progress of Dissent in Bristol. In the early part of that period it began, under its modern aspect, to appear: and this brief notice of the general state of the country will enable the reader more distinctly to understand and appreciate the circumstances in which our noble ancestors in the cause of Nonconformity stood.

CHAPTER III.

THE RISE OF DISSENT IN BRISTOL.

“Them that honour me I will honour.”

THE WESTERN METROPOLIS.—YEAMANS AT ST. PHILIP’S.—WROTH,
FROM WALES.—HAZARD AT ST. NICHOLAS’.—RESULTS OF HIS
LABOURS.—FIRST DISSENTING SOCIETY.—SUFFERINGS.—EJECTED
MINISTERS IN BRISTOL.

THE seeds of Puritanism scattered over England by the labours and sufferings of the preceding period (as referred to in the former chapter) had fallen, amongst other places, on the soil of the western metropolis, and began now, in the early part of the seventeenth century, to spring up, and to bear fruit to the praise of the Lord of the vineyard. In the year 1604, and for many years afterwards, an excellent and devoted clergyman of the Church of England, of the name of Yeamans, occupied the pulpit of St. Philip’s, and was intent, “in season and out of season,” in teaching the inhabitants of that populous parish “the way of God for their salvation.” He was a sincerely pious and useful man, whose preaching was both powerful and popular, and whose spiritual views of the kingdom of Christ ill accorded with

some of the superstitious rites and ceremonies he was called upon to perform. The result of his ministrations was a spirit of enquiry and investigation excited among the people, and in some, indications of earnest and spiritual piety which the trammels of an Establishment would not long be able to restrain. He himself, we are told, "would not suffer his hearers to use any blind devotion, as bowing at the name of Jesus, nor to enjoy their customary walking and profaning of the Sabbath; and awakened souls, and honest-minded people did very much flock to hear him." "They sat under his light near twenty years, keeping many fast-days together, namely, at one William Listun's house, a glover, near Lawford's Gate; and at one Richard Langford's house, a house-carpenter, in the Castle; and sometimes at other places. But at these two places they met mostly; where they did cry day and night to the Lord." This was the commencement of Dissent in Bristol; that is, of holding separate assemblies, at uncanonical hours, in unconsecrated places, and for the services of free prayer and praise, otherwise than that of the Church of England, according to primitive custom, and in dependance upon that promise of the Saviour, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Mr. Yeamans laboured till 1633, and in that year was called to receive his reward.

It is not to be supposed that the work thus begun would stop here; that the little "leaven" would not prevail; or that the "mustard seed," then cast into the earth, would not spring up and become a spreading tree. The great Lord of the harvest had otherwise designed, and as He had "much people" in this city ultimately to bring to

Himself, He provided the means, and commissioned the servants to be employed.

Both during the ministry, and subsequent to the death of Mr. Yeamans, an eminent minister, who "for the powerfulness and efficaciousness of his preaching, and for the exemplary holiness of his life, was called 'the Apostle of Wales,' was accustomed frequently to visit Bristol, and preach to attentive multitudes, wherever they would assemble, 'the words of this life.'" This distinguished and honoured man, whose name was Wroth, had been educated at Oxford, and became afterwards rector of Llanvaches, in Monmouthshire. About the year 1620 he was convinced of the vanity of all earthly pleasures, by the sudden death of a friend, and devoted himself with great success to the ministry of the word. For refusing to read the "Book of Sports," and other uncanonical acts, he was brought under the power of Laud in the High Commission Court, in the years 1634 and 1635. He was one of the "reforming ministers" of South Wales, of whom Mr. Cradock, Mr. Symonds, Mr. Walter, and Mr. Moreton, were others. Mr. Wroth was eminently blest in his labours in that part of the Principality. "By his ministry it pleased the Lord to convert many, so that they left their sinful courses in the world: after which he caused them to separate from a worldly Establishment, and gathered them into the Gospel order of church government:" "which light of theirs," observes the writer of the "Broad Mead Records," "began to shine very much in this part of the land." This was the origin of Independency in Wales. "In November, 1639, Mr. Henry Jessey was sent from London into Monmouthshire, to assist old Mr. Wroth, Mr. Cradock, and others, in their

gathering and constituting the church in Llanvaches, which afterwards was like Antioch, the mother church in that gentile country; being very famous for its officers, members, and gifts." "It was a church," says another memorial, "of Independents and Baptists mixed, yet united in communion; they had two ministers, co-pastors, Mr. Wroth, an Independent, and Mr. William Thomas, a Baptist."* By this eminent Independent minister from Wales, and others associated with him as mentioned above, was the Gospel of the grace of God frequently proclaimed in Bristol, "and when they came," it is recorded, "the professors would run after them as hungry souls for food."

About this time also, in the good providence of God, a worthy young clergyman, of the name of Hazard, was sent to the city, and, in part, supplied the loss occasioned by the decease of good Mr. Yeamans, whose removal from them the pious people much deplored. He appears to have been a truly enlightened and evangelical minister; celebrated for his piety and zeal; and earnestly opposed to the vices of the times. For a while he preached at the church of St. Nicholas, and thither multitudes flocked to hear him; but on account of his puritanical spirit and tendencies, and his fearless assertion of Divine truth, he was dismissed from thence, and became afterwards, for a short season, a lecturer at Redcliffe, till a regular minister was appointed there.

* Mr. Henry Morris, in "An Account of the Churches in Wales," published in 1675, says—"The original church gathered in this county (Monmouthshire) was the first in all Wales that I can hear of. Holy and reverend Mr. Wroth was the first Gospel preacher here. The original materials of a church were culled by his ministry, and cast into the mould of church order according to the New England way in his days. After his decease, Mr. Walter Cradock was chosen pastor of it, and was assistant to old Mr. Wroth. After some time the church was divided into two parts, which continue to this day, and are indeed two distinct churches."

This was in 1639. In the close of that year Mr. Hazard was chosen preacher at the church of St. Ewins, where he continued for about four years : and, though ministering in the Establishment, his labours, and his private intercourse with the people, seem quite to have favoured the principles of Puritanism and Dissent. He encouraged the pious people to meet together for mutual exhortation and prayer. He even permitted it at his own house. And many from different parishes were accustomed to resort to his church, after the common prayers were ended, to hearken to the word of truth from his lips.

The spirit of freedom and enquiry thus awakened, and the love of Christian fellowship and privileges which it engendered, were not allowed to spread in the city without much opposition and contention. Already the subjects of the kingdom of darkness were alarmed : the evil hated the good : and “that which was after the flesh persecuted that which was after the spirit.” Many and grievous were the annoyances which the religious people suffered in their peaceable assemblies ; and more than once were they severely dealt with, threatened with legal procedure, and imprisoned. But He whom they honoured defended them by His care, and defeated the purposes of their enemies. The more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and grew. Till at length, strong in faith, in principles, and in numbers, they apprehended that the time was come for a more public and formal separation from the corrupt hierarchy of the day, and for a distinct avowal of their preferences for the more spiritual institutions and worship of the Gospel dispensation. This led to the formation of the first Dissenting church in Bristol. Five individuals, in the year 1640

“gave themselves first unto the Lord, and then unto each other,” to walk together according to His will for mutual edification, and for the enjoyment of Christian privileges. They met at first, and for a considerable while, in private houses; but afterwards fixed their place of worship in a room, or rooms, in the lower part of Broadmead. And from this little flock, which was at first united without any regard whatever to the question of baptism—simply as a number of believers in Christ associated together—afterwards sprang the goodly fraternity of Christian brethren whose interesting memorials are found in the “Broad Mead Records,” and which continues, in their descendants, to assemble, a prosperous Christian church, on the same spot, to the present day.

It is worthy of observation, and claims to be noticed here, that this venerable and honoured Christian society was at the first, and for many years, a Pædobaptist community. The question is of comparatively little importance, but it seems proper to be mentioned in these memorials. “Hitherto” (1651), writes Mr. J. M. Chandler, senior deacon of Broadmead church at the present time, in a manuscript of his own, which the writer has been kindly permitted to peruse, “this church (Broadmead) had been altogether Pædobaptist.”

Again. “In the year 1653 this church became a mixed, or free communion church. Hitherto, at least from its reorganization in 1645 or 1646, it had been entirely composed of Pædobaptists. It now retained such of its members as became Baptists, and opened the door for the admission of either class of Christians.”

Again. “This church from the first was a Christian

church, and for nearly a hundred years it could not properly be termed either a Pædobaptist or a Baptist church."

So happily were the minds of the people intent upon "the great things of God's law," and upon the enjoyment of the glorious truths and privileges of the "everlasting Gospel" among them, in which they were all agreed. It was their honour.

Before we dismiss the general topic of Dissent in Bristol, it may not be out of place, but interesting and useful to add, what various narratives sufficiently shew, and what the following details will confirm, that its noble principles continued to work, and to maintain the struggle with corruption and worldliness throughout the stormy vicissitudes of the seventeenth century. During the reign of the profligate Charles—through all the period of the Civil Wars—under the Commonwealth—and after the Restoration, a goodly band was found in this city who earnestly contended for evangelical doctrine, discipline, and worship. In the Church as by law established, and out of it, the spirit of Puritanism was found to prevail: and when the infatuated monarch of 1662 caused the unprincipled "Act of Uniformity" to be passed, and come into operation, several honoured servants of the Redeemer who laboured diligently in "the word of the truth of the Gospel" in this city, were compelled to resign their pulpits and their livings, rather than violate their consciences, or worship the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Their names and excellencies are recorded in "Palmer's Nonconformists' Memorial," from which we give the following brief extracts:—

"Mr. EDWARD HANCOCK: from St. Phillip's. He was an earnest moving preacher. He died at Howil, two miles from the city."

"Mr. JOHN KNOWLES, of Magdalene College, Cambridge. He was a preacher in the Cathedral of Bristol, and lived in great credit and usefulness. He was ousted there soon after King Charles came in, and in 1662 was silenced. He came afterwards to London, where he continued preaching as he had opportunity. When some of his friends dissuaded him for fear of a prison, he answered them thus, "In truth I had rather be in a jail where I might have a number of souls to whom I might preach the truths of my blessed Master, than live idle in my own house without any such opportunities." And indeed he went about doing good. His discourse in company about God's dealings with him, his temptations, and afflictions, and deliverances, and supports, were so many affecting melting sermons. During King Charles' indulgence he preached stately to a people in St Katharine's. He was so fervent in his work that he sometimes preached till he fell down. During the sickness in 1665 he was very useful to such as stayed in the city, visiting rich and poor without fear. He lived to a good old age, and died in 1685."

"Mr. THOMAS EWINS. He was very laborious and successful. One sermon of his upon blind Bartimeus was a means of the conversion of many. He was remarkable for his meekness, patience, and charity. The Mayor and Aldermen in Cromwell's time called him ordinarily to preach at Christ church in the mornings, and at Maryport's in the afternoons. He also repeated at St. Ewins and St. Leonards: preached a Tuesday's lecture at St. Nicholas: and on Fridays, at St. Phillip's and St. Michael's Almshouses alternately: and held a conference on Thursdays. He was very grave and serious everywhere, and full of good discourse. Upon the Restoration he soon quitted the public pulpits. The Bishop courted him to conformity, but he could by no means be satisfied to comply. He was often in prison, once for a whole year, where he preached twice a day. There he contracted a lethargic distemper, of which he died, aged about 60. He left a good name behind him."

"St. James'. Mr. JOHN PAUL."

"St. Nicholas. Mr. RALPH FARMER. He retired three miles out of the town, and preached to the colliers at his own house at Hannam. He died about 1669."

"Mr. WILLIAM THOMAS, of Oxford University. He was a Minister and Schoolmaster in this city in Cromwell's time; and he continued so afterwards, though he had no fixed place. He was tempted to conform by considerable offers in Wales, but refused to the last. He trained up many for the ministry; and died at Bristol 1693."

"Mr. RICHARD BLINMAN."

"Dr. IC HABOD CHAUNCEY." Of whom more afterwards in this volume."

CHAPTER IV.

PRINCIPLES OF INDEPENDENCY.

“The churches of Judea which were in Christ.”

TO WHAT THE TERM APPLIES. — CATHOLICITY. — BROTHERLY LOVE.
— APPEAL TO SCRIPTURE. — EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH. —
ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST. — CHURCHES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
TESTIMONY FROM HISTORY. — INDEPENDENCY NOT INCOMPATIBLE
WITH UNION.

It has often been enquired of Independents, when engaged in their solemn assemblies, and united in promoting the interests and principles which they hold dear, and for which they are, in some respects, separated from their Christian brethren of other denominations, “What mean ye by this service?” To that interrogation we wish, before we proceed, to offer a few words in reply.

Independency is a relative term. It implies something in reference to which, and from which, the person or community of which it is affirmed is exempt and free. That it is not literally applicable, nor possibly can be, to any individual, or society of individuals, in the present world, is most freely admitted, inasmuch as all are dependent upon a superior Power, and indebted to each other

also for many, if not most, of the blessings which pertain to the present state of existence. This is readily conceded. None are more willing to recognise it than those to whom in ecclesiastical matters the name in question applies. With gratitude they acknowledge, in common with others, their obligations, as dependent creatures, to the Author of all good ; and second only to this, their dependance upon, and their attachment to, the institutions of civil society, and their union with all the interests of the great fraternity around. They are men, and therefore nothing human is foreign from their regards, or uninteresting in their esteem. They are Britons ; and therefore ardently do they love their native land, and look with patriotic eye, and sympathizing heart, on all that is venerable and lovely on the surface of the British Isles. They are Christians moreover ; and desire, in the spirit of heaven-born charity, and with hearts enlightened and enlarged by its power, to say, in reference to all who hold the Head, and are “looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life,”—“Peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ the Lord.” Devoutly would they cherish that sacred affection. Nothing, in their estimation, should separate the members of the same family. The ties which bind “the household of faith” together, and unite them to “one God and Father of all,” and to one and the same Mediator, are, they think, indissoluble. They would not have them weakened in the smallest degree, nor loosened for one hour. They lament that anything should appear ever to invade them, or apparently to estrange from each other those whom redemption has “gathered together in one,” and “reconciled” through the

blood of the Lamb. Whether in the pale of a national establishment, or out of it, they are united around the Cross. They often meet before the Throne. They are travelling the same way ; indulging the same hopes ; looking forward to the same glory, and anticipating a share in the same inheritance throughout eternal ages ; and therefore they think, in their progress thitherwards, nothing should be allowed to alienate them, or for one moment to sever their hearts asunder. If in this imperfect state they cannot, in all things, see eye to eye, nor think exactly alike, let it be no barrier to communion between the different sections of the one evangelical church : and let them all rejoice that the great principles in which they agree are of infinitely higher importance than the subordinate points in which they cannot for the present in the same judgment concur. God has doubtless wise and gracious purposes to answer by this apparent and partial diversity. Still must Scripture be supreme ; and brotherly love continue. “ Now abideth faith, hope, charity ; but the greatest of these is charity.” “ As many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

Such are the sentiments by which the Independents desire to be habitually governed in all their estimation of, and intercourse with, their fellow Christians of every name and denomination. They would ever keep in mind that the unity of the spirit is to be kept “ in the bond of peace.” But in the matter of the constitution and discipline of the church of Christ, with the word of God in their hands, and the history of past ages before their eyes, they think they see cause to differ from some institutions of ecclesiastical

polity around them, and, under the sanctions of the highest authority, to adopt and pursue "a more excellent way." They plainly perceive from the inspired records that the first societies of the followers of Christ had no connection whatever with the State; and were neither supported by it, nor indebted to it, for their existence and progress in the world. Authentic history moreover abundantly proves that for the space of three centuries this order of things continued, and that neither in Judea, in the States of Greece, or in any of the provinces of the Roman empire, did the civil authority do any thing, nor was it ever appealed to, for the sustentation or enlargement of the church of Christ. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's," the great maxim of their infallible Founder and Lord, was the principle which guided His servants in all their early labours to evangelize the world, nor did they once think of soliciting the intervention, sanction, or support of the civil power. This was often arrayed against them, and harassed and persecuted them in their benevolent career; but in no instance did they ever invoke its aid, or allow the imperial, or subordinate dignity, to interfere with their concerns. Had but one instance occurred, or, in the records of the New Testament could any approach to it be found, of appointment to office in the Christian church by the secular authority, or of a supply from the national treasury for administering to the temporal necessities of the labourers in the vineyard of Christ, we should deem it possible to reconcile our differences, and would willingly yield the point of our separation from the ecclesiastical establishment of these realms. But as the Christian church, as far as the

scripture history extends, and in the purest and best ages which immediately followed, had no connection whatever with worldly power, and as our blessed Lord never gave the least intimation that a time would come when His disciples should solicit or receive such support, we think that His infinite wisdom and will determined that it should be for ever free—that the inherent power of His own truth in the world should be its adequate glory and support—and that adapted as it was for all ages and for all nations, whatever their form of civil government might be, it should be distinct from, and independent of them all. To link the chariot of His gospel with that of any State, would be to obstruct its progress, and to hinder its triumphs in the world. The “light” of truth will shine, the little “leaven” will leaven the lump, the “mustard seed” will grow, without such aid. The vital energy of the mediatorial reign of Him who was “the life of men” will sustain itself, and prevail, apart from all the provisions, the blandishments, or the threatenings of earthly power. It did from the beginning. It does so still. Our ascended Redeemer gave to His church, ere He departed to the skies, the charter of her freedom from all human dictation and control; and therefore we think that in reference to all secular authority in sacred matters, our duty is not to be in subjection, “no, not for an hour.” We have no option. Necessity is laid upon us. The crown rights of the Son of God are involved. The enactments of the only “King of Zion” are all we dare acknowledge within the precincts of His kingdom. To “the powers that be,” especially in this our native land, in all temporal affairs, we cheerfully accord all honour, obedience, and love: but in

matters spiritual and ecclesiastical, which pertain to conscience, christian fellowship, and the worship of God, "One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren."

"Let Cæsar's due be ever paid
To Cæsar and his throne :
But consciences and souls were made
To be the Lord's alone."

Therefore, in reference to the State, we are independent and free.


But there is another view of the question, and another reason to be assigned, for the name given to that denomination of christians to which the following Memorials refer. It is a distinctive appellation in relation to other churches, and to other communities of worshippers, amidst which they dwell. They by no means arrogate to themselves the exclusive title of "the Church," nor would they assume for one moment prerogatives or immunities to which others are entitled as well as themselves. But they are compelled to believe, as they cannot but perceive, that the original societies of New Testament believers were complete in their own organization, independent of each other, and competent severally to the management of their own affairs. "The churches of Judea" were not one church, but many. "The churches of Galatia" were not united in one body corporate, as is the Church of England ; nor governed by one General Assembly, as is the Church of Scotland ; but separate individual communities, each one intrusted with the administration of its own concerns. Such also were "the churches of Macedonia," "the seven churches of Asia," and the christian societies of Rome, Corinth, Philippi, and Colosse. There is not the least indication

that they were associated together after the manner of the Episcopal Establishment of the south, or of the Presbyterian constitution of the north, to be governed by a visible head, or by power lodged in Archbishopal hands, or in the highest ecclesiastical court of the land. The dominion of "the Episcopate," the government of "the Assembly," and the rule of "Conference," alike over clergy and people, and over all the churches of a country or province, is, we think, utterly unknown in the word of God, and utterly unsanctioned by the principles, practices, and examples of the New Testament. There, each individual society is addressed and represented as competent to the management of its own affairs, and with its "bishops," or pastors, "and deacons," complete in itself, in whatever city, town, or village it stood. There was no intimation that the "elders," or ministers, and members of the church at Rome, were to unite with those at Corinth, or at Ephesus, to frame and impose any general laws, or to superintend the government of the whole: but each church, when assembled together, was to act on its own responsibility, in obedience to the commands of the same supreme Law-giver and Lord. Thus, by the inspired Apostle, "the church," in each of those places, and in the other localities which are named, is called upon to act of itself in all that relates to its communion, worship, and privileges, without the control or intervention of another. At Rome they were to "receive;" at Corinth they were to "reject;" in Macedonia they were "ready;" and in Galatia they were to guard themselves from Judaizing teachers, and to reform themselves from superstitious customs; and are admonished so to do, as if perfectly competent to this, and to every

other administration of their internal affairs. They waited for no foreign counsel: for no *ab extra* control. Each church was to adjust and regulate itself by the Divine standard; and in all things to keep the ordinances and obey the laws which, by the Lord himself, or by His Apostles, had been delivered to them. All was simple, beautiful, practicable, at the beginning. There was to be no rivalry, superiority, or dominion among them. Each society was to take heed to itself, to study the mind and will of its Heavenly Sovereign, and in doctrine, spirit, and discipline, to render obedience to his commands. No one part of the brotherhood attempted to dictate or control another, and no one was responsible to the rest. Every portion of the household held its privileges by the same tenure from the same Lord, and "walking together in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," these separate societies of Christian believers "were edified and multiplied." "Distinct as the billows, yet one as the sea," they presented a happy fulfilment of the prophetic words, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" whilst observers of more worlds than one, as they beheld them, exclaimed, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

That such was the order and constitution of the primitive churches of the New Testament, and for the first three hundred years of the evangelical dispensation, no words need be employed to prove. It is palpable and obvious to every attentive reader of the inspired records, and is equally attested by the most competent and intelligent writers of the ecclesiastical history of the early ages. "The visible church of Christ," says the nineteenth Article of the

Church of England, "is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance." A more correct and Scriptural definition could scarcely be supplied. That it agrees with every page of the New Testament is clear, and that it corresponds to all the representations of the best writers of the history of the first three centuries is equally obvious to all who read their interesting pages. Gibbon, a historian whom no one will suspect of partiality, affirms that the first christian churches were all "distinct and separate societies, each one charged with the administration of its own affairs." Lord King, Mosheim, Neander, Coleman, and others, all concur in the same representation, and unite to prove that in the purest and best ages of the evangelical era, Independency, or Congregationalism, was the form of church constitution and government which everywhere obtained; and that the christian societies planted by the Apostles and their immediate successors are most nearly imitated by the churches of the Congregational faith and order of the present day. They make it no matter of boasting. They indulge in no unhallowed pretensions. They wish not to judge others; and they are conscious of many imperfections among themselves; but they are more and more persuaded, from a careful perusal of the word of God, and an earnest consultation of the records of authentic history, that the structure and discipline of such churches, wherever they exist, most nearly resemble "the pattern shewed in the mount," and most correspond to the churches formed by the Apostles, and addressed in their inspired epistles.



Let none imagine that because the churches of the Independent faith and order are thus distinct from each other, and individually competent to the management of their own affairs, that therefore they are divided among themselves, and alienated in heart, in fellowship, or in worship, from their brethren of similar communions in different places. Far otherwise. To suppose such a thing, or even to admit its possibility, would be to reflect on the omniscience and wisdom of Him who is the "Prince of peace" and "Lord of all:" and to affirm it would be equally at variance with the testimony of history, and the union and love which obtain among them at the present time. The fact is, that there is no general division of the Christian church in which more order and substantial agreement are found: and amongst the different parts, or constituent assemblies of which, greater unity prevails. Amounting now as they do to between three and four thousand separate societies within the borders of the united kingdom, they are "of one heart and soul," and in doctrine, discipline, and ordinances, all agree. In reference to the great essentials of christian faith and duty, no discord is known, and no alienation of heart exists. Within their sanctuaries the trumpet of the gospel gives no "uncertain sound," and the same glorious verities of salvation are heard from the lips of their Ministers in every part of the land. The deacons are charged with the temporal affairs of the community to which they belong; and esteem it both their privilege and duty to assist the pastor in promoting the higher and more spiritual interests of the household of God. The pastors give themselves "to the word of God and prayer." The members know, and are

Known to each other: and when in the separate tabernacles of the earthly Zion they sit around the table of their common Lord, though it be in distinct companies, they feel that "the bond of perfectness" unites them all, and that they have "fellowship one with another" through the blood which "cleanseth from all sin." Indeed, it cannot be otherwise. The Cross is the centre around which they move. The Throne is the object before which they bow. The inexhaustible "fulness" is the source of all their supplies: and the statute-book of the kingdom is the charter of their liberties, and the guide of their conduct in all that relates to their position and prospects as a portion of the "purchased possession" of the Son of God. United in the truth, the hope, and the privileges of the Gospel, these separate assemblies of the spiritual Israel are but like the distinct tribes of ancient Judah, all one in their glorious Leader and Head; going from strength to strength till they shall meet in the celestial Zion before God, and occupy their appointed place in some of the "many mansions" which the great Forerunner is gone to prepare, as a component part of "the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."

It is to trace and record, as far as it is possible now, the origin and progress of the several churches of this faith and order in the city of Bristol, and to gather up the fragments concerning them, that nothing, worthy of remembrance, be lost, that the following pages are designed.

CHAPTER V.

CASTLE GREEN CHAPEL.

**"We went through fire, and through water, but Thou
broughtest us out into a wealthy place."**

ITS ORIGIN.—THE CASTLE.—MR. E. TERRILL.—THE GOVERNOR'S
HOUSE.—"FRIENDS."—PERSECUTIONS.—PROGRESS.—MR. JOHN
THOMPSON.—HIS SUFFERINGS, TRIAL, IMPRISONMENT, DEATH.
—MR. WEEKS.—TRIBULATIONS.—ICHABOD CHAUNCEY.—MR.
WAY.—INTERRUPTIONS.—VARIOUS MINISTERS.—MR. NOBLE.—
FOWNES.—ALEXANDER.—VAWDRY.—JILLARD.—WALKER.—
HOSKENS.—HEY.—THORP.—JACK.—QUICK.

A QUESTION, somewhat intricate, but deeply interesting to the present generation of Independent Dissenters in Bristol, comes now to be considered. It relates to the origin and early progress of the church assembling in the above chapel, the eldest of the existing Congregational communities in the city, and as such, has the first claim upon our regard. At what time, and under what circumstances, this christian society, as a distinct church, came into existence, it is now exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, precisely to determine. Indeed, the source of the fertilizing stream of Independency here is concealed by the moss and verdure

which have overgrown it : and it is only by careful observance of a footstep here and there that we can find any access to the spot where, or the time when, its living waters first began to flow. We will however with caution, hope, and gratitude proceed. And we think the search will not be in vain.

The first allusion of any kind to an assembly of persons for religious exercises in the Castle occurs in the Broadmead Records, on the eighth page, where it is said of the good people in Mr. Yeamans' time (as has been already noticed in the second chapter) that, "They sat under his light near twenty years, keeping many fast days together in private houses, namely, at one William Listun's house, a glover, near Lawford's Gate ; and at one *Richard Langford's house, a house-carpenter in the Castle* ; and sometimes at other places. But at these two places they met mostly, where they did cry, day and night, to the Lord." This was previous to the year 1633, the year in which Mr. Yeamans died, and during the "twenty years" of his ministry among them. Throughout that period they were accustomed to meet for spiritual purposes at this "house-carpenter's" abode, within the precincts of the Castle, and "mostly" at this and the other place so described. Often then, at that early period, within the walls of this renowned citadel of the west, did the children of Zion assemble for the hallowed exercises of prayer and praise. Already possession was taken of it in the name of the "Prince of Peace," and for the purposes of his worship.

The next reference to this place is one of a peculiarly interesting character, and is found in the "Experience of Mr. Edward Terrill," the writer of the "Broad Mead

Records," in which that excellent man gives a relation of what God had done for his soul, and of the way in which he had been brought out of darkness into marvellous light. He says, writing of the year 1654, "The next day, being the sabbath, notwithstanding I was doubtful of the way, I went to sermon as formerly at church, and after the evening service I put my bible in my pocket, and had thought to go to the Meeting that was usually after sermon in the Castle, at the governor's (Colonel Scroope) house. When I came to my master's house I had a great conflict whether I should go thither, or down to my mother's, where I did use to go after sermons. At length I followed that motion that would have me to go to the meeting, and to the meeting I came. No sooner had I sat down, and beheld the people, but these words started into my breast, 'This is the way, walk in it,' with such delight in my soul that I could almost have wept for joy, the tears standing in my eyes. Now I did not know that those words were written in scripture, but did conceive it to be an answer from God to me, and so it continued in my heart."

This was at the commencement of the Commonwealth. The Castle had been yielded to the victorious Cromwell in 1645. All was now under his rule. As in other military positions of the kingdom, so here, godliness was acknowledged; prayer, and praise, and the exposition of the Divine word, were no uncommon things; and in this "Centurion's house" in Bristol Castle, incense and a pure offering to the Eternal were accustomed to arise. The meeting was "usually" held there. Colonel Scroope himself, we may conclude, was favourable to the cause of evangelical truth and piety; probably a sincerely devout

man; and within the walls of his capacious habitation the followers of Christ were permitted and encouraged to assemble. On one occasion, when thus convened, EDWARD TERRILL, by an invisible hand, was directed among them, and there was his conversion to God helped forward, who was afterwards to become one of the most devoted christians, and one of the most useful men, the city of Bristol contained.

An amusing incident is recorded in Mr. Sewell's "History of the Friends" which serves to throw a little additional light on the period, and on its assemblies for the worship of God; and may be noticed here. "We will take a turn towards Bristol," says the Author, "to behold the performances of John Audland and Thomas Airey, who came thither in the month called July in the year 1654, and going into *the meetings of the Independents and Baptists*, they found opportunity to preach truth, &c." This was when the Quakers first came to Bristol. They found meetings of "Independents and Baptists" there. And we quote the above simply to shew that they existed at that time, and that they were distinct and separate societies.

What now is the fair and legitimate conclusion to which we are conducted by these premises, containing as they do, almost, if not quite, all the intimations that are left us of the rise of Independency in Bristol, and of the origin of the cause in Castle Green? It is not likely that such an interesting movement within the walls of the ancient citadel would die away, without anything to survive it: or that such religious meetings would have been for so long a period, and so frequently, held, without permanent results.

The first links of the chain we have discovered. Was it abruptly broken? or, were none ever formed to connect it with our own day? Rather, may we not infer that out of these religious associations, so long, and so frequently held, a christian church at length arose, constituted after the pattern of the New Testament, and perpetuated, through the gracious care and providence of God, to the present time. When it was regularly formed, who were its first members, and by what human hands they were first joined together "for a habitation of God through the Spirit," we have no means now of ascertaining. The early records of its progress are lost. But we think we are justified, in the absence of all evidence to the contrary, and in the impossibility of accounting for its origin in any other way, to assign it to this period, and to the above-mentioned circumstances; that is, previous to the year 1654, and a little before, or soon after, the church in Broadmead was formed. We are not at all concerned to determine which, nor does it matter. Only certain it is, that before anything is said of the Broadmead society, mention is made of these religious meetings in "the house of the carpenter in the Castle."*

Assuming that the origin and formation of the church in the Castle, now of Castle Green, was near the middle of the seventeenth century, that is, somewhere about 1650, we are left in part to conjecture what its history for the

* The writer is glad to observe that Mr. Chandler, with his usual care and candour, thinks that the church at Castle Green originated about this time. He says, in the manuscript before referred to, "The church in the Castle was in existence before 1670. We have seen that there was, as early as 1654, a meeting usually held in the Castle, at Governor Scroop's house, and it is not improbable that the Castle congregation, now subsisting, originated at first in the army, but we have no account of its progress."

next twenty years may have been, save only that from the character of the times, and allusions in the Broadmead Records, we may discover a little. During the time of Cromwell, and under the brief rule of his son Richard, the churches in Bristol, as well as elsewhere, had rest. But, "on the 29th day of the third month, anno 1660," writes Mr. Terrill, the faithful chronicler of events, "when King Charles the Second was brought from his exile again into the nation, and to the crown, then Satan stirred up adversaries against us, and our trouble and persecution began." In these tribulations the Dissenting churches in Bristol were deeply involved, and their various societies were perpetually disturbed and harassed by malicious men, who sought to execute upon them the cruel and arbitrary laws of the times. The "Conventicle Act," enforced by the Bishop and the Mayor of the city, was a source of peculiar annoyance and vexation, and was often carried into effect, to break up their peaceful assemblies, and inflict upon not a few of them imprisonment and fines. Seven distinct persecutions are recorded as having burst upon them, some of them "like a violent storm," betwixt the years 1660 and 1670: and most painful is it to observe the atrocities inflicted in the name of Justice, and the measures resorted to by unprincipled men to disturb, to accuse, and to convict the innocent followers of the Lamb.

But painful as these persecutions were, and formidable the great "fight of afflictions" they were called to endure, the societies of believers in Bristol (there were now six) held on their way, and waxed stronger and stronger. They met together. They sympathized with each other. "They spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and

heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him;" so that all that their adversaries could do could not blot out the record of them in heaven, nor burst asunder the hallowed bonds by which they were united on earth. The Broadmead church, with its faithful pastor, suffered much; the Presbyterian brethren, under Mr. WEEKS, not a little; and the Castle society was equally involved. But God enabled them to persevere. An invisible hand sustained them in the flames; and in the waters they were not overwhelmed. External tribulations, as in other instances, but cemented the bonds of Christian love: and when oppressed by the hostility and extortions of men, they found refuge in the faithfulness and love of an unchanging God.*

The church in the Castle had enjoyed, for a part of this time, the ministrations of a teacher or elder of the name of HICKS, of whom nothing is left us but the mention of his name. But the year 1670 brought among them a pastor of peculiar celebrity, alike for his learning and piety, his excellence and usefulness, his successful services for the souls of men, and the sufferings and death by which he was to glorify God. This was the eminent Mr. JOHN THOMPSON, of whom we owe it to his memory to record all that can be ascertained; for though "dead he yet speaketh," and though near two centuries have elapsed since he laboured and died, a peculiar fragrance still rises at the very mention of his name: besides which, he appears

* "From an expression in the Broadmead Records from Mr. Terrill's pen—'at Mr. Thompson's meeting place in the Castle, near the Water Gate,'—it is deemed probable that the Independent church met at this time at the back of Castle Street, near to Queen Street, where the Water Gate was originally supported by two towers."—MR. CHANDLER'S MS.

to have been the first stated pastor of the Castle society, and the first Christian hero, of these times, who in Bristol sealed his testimony with his blood.

The following, which is believed to be the best account now extant concerning him, is taken from a pamphlet, published in 1675, and now very scarce, entitled, "A Reply to the Bristol Narrative: or a more Just Account of the Imprisonment and Death of Mr. John Thompson, Minister of the Gospel:"—

"As to Mr. Thompson, he was a man of sobriety and moderation, a Christian, a divine, a scholar, and eminent in all; whose searching, serious, solid preaching, proclaimed his worth, and whose prudent and pious conversation did commend and crown his preaching.

"Mr. John Thompson was the son of Mr. Hugh Thompson, sometime Minister in Dorchester, and afterwards in the Isle of Wight. His parents bestowed on him a liberal education. He was a student of Christ Church, Oxford, in which place he approved himself, being well attested by his contemporaries for his virtue and learning. When he had been about nine years in Oxford, the government of the Church returning again to Episcopacy, and conformity being strictly required of all that would hold any University preferment, he was led to study the points then in controversy, which he did impartially, being loth to lose his fellowship. Being unable to yield the conformity required, he returned to Dorchester, and laboured in a congregation of which Mr. Ben was pastor, whose daughter he married. Here he was highly esteemed for his ministerial qualifications. By the recommendation of many ministers who knew him, he was invited by a congregation in Bristol, commonly assembling in the Castle, which was hardly successful, owing to the attachment of the people in Dorchester, who held out no small advantages to keep him, but judging his call clear, he removed, with his family to Bristol about 1670, where he laid himself out to the utmost. The Lord was pleased wonderfully to succeed his labours. His conversation was so holy, harmless, and unblameable, that the worst of his adversaries had not whereof to accuse him in his life-time, save in the matter of his God. He was more especially strict and

eminent in the exercise of temperance, so that the charge of intemperance, made after his death, was peculiarly malicious. It pleased God, partly through the prudence, peaceableness, and moderation of the former Bishop of Bristol, and partly by the King's declaration and license, that he passed the most part of his time in Bristol without molestation, and that even when other places were disturbed; and so had done probably to this day, had not the forward zeal of the present Bishop been let loose against him. The Bishop no sooner came here than he began with little artifices and restless instigations to provoke the civil Magistrates, who till then had granted us all the peace and liberty we could desire, to disturb our assemblies, and to put the laws in execution against our ministers, and particularly that of Corporations, as the most probable expedient to destroy our meetings. That the Bishop might give the most effectual assistance to this work, he substituted as many of his clergy as he could prevail with, as informers, there being very few others at that time base enough for the work, to visit our meetings, both upon sabbaths and week days, to swear against our ministers in order to their imprisonment. The parsons employed against the Castle meeting were Mr. Heath and Mr. Godwin, and to shew how particular an enmity he bore against Mr. Thompson, caused him to be the first minister convicted, upon which conviction the fine of twenty pounds was inflicted on him, and warrants for distress were issued out. In order to avoid these he was forced for several weeks before his apprehension to keep fast his doors. The constables were often questioned why distress was not taken, who still replied that his doors were always kept shut. The next plot was to seize his person, which, that it might be more effectually compassed, some civil and military officers, besides ecclesiastics, combined in order to do it. Upon Wednesday, the 10th of February, the Bishop, together with four clergymen, Williamson, Pledwell, Heath, and his own chaplain, two Justices of the peace, one Captain of the militia, with some other military officers, come altogether to the meeting where he was preaching, to apprehend him. Some of his hearers, willing to have secured his liberty till the next Lord's day, when it was judged the other Nonconformist ministers would be apprehended, understanding his danger, shut the doors of the meeting, about which the officers and a great multitude assemble. The disturbance, through noise and knocking, being so great that he could not proceed, he was forced to desist, and upon the persuasion of divers, at another door

escaped into a house adjoining to the Meeting place. After they had very rudely dispersed the assembly, taking as many names as they could, and still continuing their cry after the minister, a boy that saw him going into the said house, being an apprentice to a singing man of the College, betrayed him into their hands; for which the Judas received from the reverend Father a sixpenny reward. He was no sooner found than a great acclamation arose, and he was presently carried to the Mayor's. After he came there he was baited by the clergy for some hours, exposed to the utmost extravagance and rage from the Bishop, and stigmatized as seditious, villain, factious fellow, sirrah,—that he deserved to stretch a halter. After having modestly rebuked the Bishop for his unbridled passion, as utterly unbecoming a gospel Bishop, he replied to the names by which he was addressed: 'Sir, "Master" is my title by the law of the land, for I am a Master of Arts of the University of Oxford.' After a long argument, it was concluded that he must away to gaol, as being found in a Corporation after a former conviction, according to the Oxford Act, unless he would take the Corporation oath. Refusing this, his mittimus was made. He moved that as it was late he might be permitted to be at home that night, to which the Mayor seemed willing, and spake to the Bishop about it, who in great wrath ordered him to prison, with opprobrious epithets, as the fittest place; whereupon he was sent.

"During the argument, the parsons behaved very insolently towards him, especially Pledwell and Heath, who were placed on each hand of him, catching at his words, and jeering at him. Pledwell did often insinuate his inability to defend his practice, to whom he, turning himself, said, 'Sir, *Tolle legem, et fiat certamen.*' He had no sooner spoken than the parson, supposing he now had sufficient advantage against him, applied himself to the Bishop, charging Mr. Thompson with speaking seditious words, which he thought could signify no other thing than that he would have the laws removed, that so they might fight it over again. The Bishop was of the same mind, and acquainted the Justices with the seditious words. They challenged him for it. He owned the words, and said, 'they were the words of Ambrose to Valentinian the Emperor in like case, and therefore I may well say the same to Mr. Pledwell. All I mean is but this—Let but the law lie by, against which I must speak if I plead for my own practice, and I fear not to dispute with him the whole controversy between us.' There were some passages also between the justices and him which

were remarkable. One told him that he had broken the law. He answered, 'Sir, I am here to suffer, and so the law will be satisfied. I have not broken the law of God in what I have done, and that I am ready to maintain against any one who shall deny it,' which he said to try the Bishop, whether he would take up the argument, but he would not. 'You had best say,' said the justice, 'that the King's laws are against the law of God.' 'Sir,' said he, 'I said no such thing. You say I have broken the law of man, and I say I have not broken the law of God.' The justice answered, 'In going against the law of the King, you go against the law of God, because the law of God requires subjection to the laws of the King.' He told him, 'that he denied his argument. Scripture tells us we must obey men only in and for the Lord, which limitation being admitted, I still assert,' said he, 'that I have not broken the law of God, though I have the law of man.' 'What's that!' the Bishop stepped up and said, 'who is that that interpreteth Scripture?' 'That, sir, do I,' said he. 'Thou interpret Scripture?' said the Bishop. 'It is my work,' said he, 'to do so, as I am a minister of Christ.' 'Thou a minister of Christ?' said the Bishop. 'I am,' saith he, 'a scriptural bishop, and do assert it.' At which many of their party laughed, but he told them 'he was not affected at their laugh, but owned what he had said, and was ready to prove it.' He was also charged by one of them with being a thief and a robber, as not coming in at the door. To whom he replied, that 'If he would search into the true meaning of that text he would find that he came in by the door there mentioned.' The same party charged him with going about to set up calves at Dan and Bethel, and following his own fancy. To whom he said, 'The calf was uninstituted worship, which I do disown. I am for that worship only which the word of God requires, so that the calf is not mine. Let them have it to whom it belongs.' These are but a few of the things which passed at the Mayor's. Well; he was brought to Newgate that night, and remained there in perfect health for the space of fourteen days, as many can testify, and therefore he did not complain within three days after his commitment, as in the keeper's affidavit, for he was committed on the 10th of February, and on the 25th grew into some indisposition of body, which he bore up under that day and the next. At night, finding himself grow worse, he sent for Dr. Chauncey, his usual physician, who at once judged his case would prove serious, and therefore endeavoured immediately to procure his removal into some convenient chamber. A person of

quality then present offered to go to the sheriff with the doctor; and they went together to Sheriff Wharton, and requested he might be in a fit room, and for his security he offered a £500 bond, and that he should be a true prisoner. The Sheriff was inclined thereto, but signified how fearful he was of incurring prejudice, especially from the Bishop, who, he said, kept a strict watchful eye upon them. However, he told them he would do what he could the next morning. They told him his case was dangerous, and admitted of no delay; whereupon they proposed to advise with Sir John Knight, and the Sheriff was pleased to go with them. Sir John Knight declared his unwillingness to advise anything, or to have any hand in his removal, fearing lest such a favour might be construed a fallacious imprisonment, and so might prove matter of great trouble and damage to the sheriffs. All that could be said in reply availed nothing. All that they could gain was, that in case the Bishop would grant their desire they would not oppose it, and therefore wished them to go to the Bishop. They replied, 'Sirs, you are the proper persons to apply to, and therefore if you deny our request, it is not to be expected the Bishop should grant it, neither shall we go to him.' They then returned the unwelcome tidings that their request could not be granted. However, that the Bishop might not escape scot-free in that matter, Sir John Knight was pleased the next day to go to him himself about Mr. Thompson's removal, to whom he answered, as one of the sheriffs reported, that 'Mr. Thompson was committed by the law to the common jail for six months, and that there he should abide, and in case the sheriffs should attempt his release, they should answer it at the severity of the law.' The foolish priest, not reflecting that though the law committed him, the prison might not be able to retain him, and that though he determined his confinement there, there was One able to release him, whom episcopal power could not control.

'Whilst men resolved he should a prisoner be,
And to close bondage did his life decree;
A Liberare issues from the sky,
And gives that freedom which his foes deny.'

Notwithstanding all the means that could be used, his fever grew upon him daily till the 4th of March, when, about midnight, he died, to the great lamentation of many in Bristol, as appeared by the many mournful countenances and weeping eyes of those that attended him to the grave, which was the next day, when

thousands accompanied his corpse to the churchyard of St. Philip's parish.

"In his last illness he did most affectionately declare what great delight he took in the company of his fellow prisoners; but, said he, 'As I was sent hither first, so I shall be released before you. As for those who sent me hither, and refused to remove me, (naming the Bishop and some others) though they have been cruel to me, yet do I from my heart forgive them. I should be glad to meet them in heaven who cast me into prison, which is now like to be my death. The Lord work effectually upon them by His free grace, to bring them thither at last.' Then he discoursed how he had of late been contemplating what it was to enjoy God, and what a mighty change death would make in a moment upon a gracious soul. 'I have,' said he, 'endeavoured to live a life of faith. I have been by grace preserved from gross sins, though not without manifold imperfections, which have caused trouble. There is nothing in the world which I have valued in comparison with Christ, and I have fixed my only hope on His satisfaction and merits; though I have not enjoyed much full assurance, yet I have not been without spiritual refreshments.' Apprehending the hour of his dissolution near at hand, he called for his fellow prisoners, whom observing to weep bitterly, he said, 'Sirs, I did not send for you for this work—pray make my being here as comfortable as you can, that I may speak to and for the Lord. Therefore, tell me, which is the shortest and surest way to know whether we are passed from death unto life?' Mr. Weeks replied, 'I will give you the same answer which Mr. Ben, your father-in-law, gave me to the same question, "He that hath the Son hath life." To which, with calm and composed spirit he said, 'To have the Son is to believe on Him, and faith is a real willingness to receive an offered Christ on offered terms;' speaking much at large on the work of Christ in renewing the soul. Sometime after, alluding to his situation, 'he felt he could justify himself in the course he had pursued.' 'He trusted the Lord would be with his brethren, and would grant them to go out of prison in health. As for my bonds, I bless God for them, and if I had known when I came in that I should die here, I would have done no otherwise than I have done. The time will come when I shall be freed from the aspersions of faction.' He especially cared for his church, counselling them in reference to their choice of another pastor; and no less weighty advice did he give to several Christians, when he took his solemn farewell, advising them to cleave to God, His

ways, truth, and institutions,—to get into a condition fit to die. At length, being spent, while Mr. Weeks was in prayer, commending his soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, he expired.”—March 4, 1675.

Thus did this honoured man seal his testimony with his blood.*

The year that witnessed the induction of Mr. Thompson to the pastoral office over the church in the Castle (1670) was remarkable also for the addition to its fellowship of another excellent and somewhat renowned individual, in the person of Mr. ICHABOD CHAUNCEY, M.D., (referred to in the preceding pages) whose admission stands briefly recorded in the first page of the venerable little Church Book which has happily come down to us from this time to the present day. He is there described as having been received, March 29, 1670, “on a letter of dimission from the church in Coggleshall, of which he was a member : exiled in August,

* The following extract from Mr. Terrell's writings in the Broad Mead Records, will furnish another specimen of the tribulations of the Dissenters at this time in Bristol, and of the happy union which prevailed under them :—

“Upon the 15th day of the third month, 1675, being the day of their trial at the Court of Westminster, in London, the four congregations that were in Bristol under persecution, namely, some of Mr. Weeks' and Mr. Hardcastle's, some of Mr. Thompson's and Mr. Gifford's, met together to humble themselves before the Lord, and to seek His face for their two ministers, and two brethren, on their trial in London, aforesaid. And being come early in the morning, assembled in the Castle, in the meeting place of Mr. Thompson, deceased. One of each congregation prayed : and then they went round again, so that eight brethren prayed, and a minister concluded that was of neither of the congregations, from seven in the morning until twelve at noon. Which union, and joint praying together was much liked of by all parties. Thus, being driven together by the universal trouble, endeavours were used, (why should we not ?) to strengthen ourselves against the Bishop and his abettors, to meet altogether upon the week days, and turn our four lectures into one, and by turn to be managed by all ; so that whereas every church did keep and hold up one lecture apiece, a general lecture should be kept every week for all ; so that they would still have one lecture to which all might come ; which would by the conjunction be very numerous ; thereby more formidable and terrible to the adversary, if we did so unite.”

1684: returned to Bristol 1686: died July 25, 1691: and buried by his children in Philip's churchyard." This good man was the son of the Rev. Charles Chauncey, minister of Ware, in Hertfordshire, who suffered much for Nonconformity; and brother of Mr. Isaac Chauncey, M.A. and M.D., who was for some time tutor of an Independent academy in London. Mr. Ichabod Chauncey was a man of superior talents, of decided piety, and of liberal education. He had also been trained for the ministry, and had been chaplain to Sir Edward Harley's regiment at Dunkirk; but on the passing of the Act of Uniformity became a physician in Bristol. Here he was highly esteemed by all who knew him, both for his religious character and his professional ability, and was eminently useful alike to the spiritual and temporal interests of his fellow-citizens. But in the year 1684 the fury of episcopal zeal, and the malice of clerical bigotry, burst forth against him, as one of the chief of the conventicle. He was arraigned before the city tribunal, and after nobly enduring his trial, and answering all the charges brought against him, he was condemned on the 35th of Elizabeth, and by that Act suffered banishment. On the 15th of August, 1684, says the memorial, "they passed a sentence of banishment on Dr. Chauncey, and made him swear that he would depart the city and nation within three months, and never return without the King's leave. The Doctor was very cheerful under all, although he had been above four months in prison already; and on the 29th Dr. Chauncey went privately to London, in order to go to Holland." On the liberty afforded by King James, in 1686, he returned however to Bristol; lived for about five years in the bosom of his family and friends; and on

the 25th of July, 1691, his happy spirit took its departure to a better world. Many made lamentation over him : and amidst tokens of much respect he was interred in St. Philip's Churchyard, where "his sepulchre is with us to this day."

The next Pastor was the Rev. BENJAMIN WAY, who, on the 16th of August, 1676, at the church meeting, "having declared his acceptance of the call to the office, was then admitted, with the consent of all, but one only excepted, as member and pastor." He was recognized as such on the 6th of October following, and then "solemnly set apart to his work by fasting and prayer." His ministry, however, was not of long duration. In November, 1680, he died, and was buried at St. Philip's.

Nothing now appears in the little church book of the Castle for the space of nine years, owing probably to the confused state of the society, and the numerous interruptions of its worship by the relentless hand of persecution. Many and severe were the troubles which came upon them during this period from the opposition and malice of those in power, and from the devices employed to harass and hinder them ; in which all the congregations were alike involved. On one occasion it is stated, "On two Lord's days in July the Castle meeting was haunted by the informers, having Alderman Lawford for their assistant, but could not get in, the doors being shut." On another, "Upon the first day of the sixth month the said informers came to Mr. Way's meeting in the Castle, and Sir Robert Yeomans, and many more, and broke open the doors, (but they had conveyed away their minister before the informers came in,) and by proclamation they commanded the people

to depart, and sent Mr. William Wade, and Nathaniel his brother, to Newgate, and beat another until all bloody." In the year following, "Helliard and Knight were in haste because they heard there was a meeting privately in the Castle, to which therefore they went, about six the same evening, and broke open the doors, endeavouring with great fury to seize Mr. Young the preacher, but could not; for while they were getting in, he, with others, got out at a window, and escaped through a house into Castle Street. Then Helliard and the Sheriff brake down the pulpit, and bid the boys and rabble take care of the windows, which they understood, and brake them all to pieces. When they were weary they left a watch in the meeting-house all night, and the next day defaced and ruined it, as they had done ours before."*

Such are specimens of the unworthy transactions which dishonoured the City of Bristol in the years intervening between 1680 and 1688, and of the sufferings which some of its best and most peaceful citizens had to endure. The worshippers of God were insulted, buffeted, and cruelly intreated, wherever they could be found. Justices of the peace were principally employed in seeking to annoy them; in suborning false witnesses against them; and abusing the judgment-seat to condemn them. Fines and penalties were inflicted without mercy. The prison received many of them within its gloomy and wretched walls; and the Newgate of Bristol became almost as renowned for its innocent victims as the Marshalsea of the Metropolis, or the Inquisition of Rome. Such, however, was the treatment to which Britain's sons were subjected in the ignoble reign of the

* Broad Mead Records.

Second James, until, in 1688, the standard of liberty was lifted up, and the glorious Revolution blessed the British Isles.

All this while the christian flock of the Castle had been destitute of a stated pastor, and the only allusion to a minister is, that on two different occasions a Mr. STACKHOUSE and a Mr. YOUNG were administering to them the word of truth. But in the year 1689 their eyes again beheld their teacher, and an entrance occurs that, "Mr. ISAAC NOBLE, having declared his acceptance of the call of the church to be their pastor, was set apart to his office by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands, by the elders of other churches, called to the assistance of the church to that end; on the 28th of May, with consent of all."

Mr. Noble's ministry, which appears to have been a very peaceful and useful one, continued for the space of about eighteen years; when "Mr. GEORGE FOWNES, being free from his pastoral relation to another church, and having accepted the call of this to become joint pastor thereof, was publicly received into that office, at a day of prayer on the 8th of June, 1708." This was the son of the excellent Mr. Fownes, who had been pastor at Broadmead, and who died, in 1685, in Gloucester Jail, "after having been kept there two years and nine months a prisoner, unjustly and maliciously, for the testimony of Jesus, and preaching the gospel." He was another precious victim to the persecuting spirit of the times; so fraternally involved were the Baptists and Pædobaptists of that day in labours and sufferings for the cause of their common Lord. Mr. Fownes, jun., had also been pastor, for a few years, of the Broadmead society: but having changed his views on the

subject of Baptism, and had his household baptized, as we think, in the scriptural way, he accepted a cordial invitation to the co-pastorate of the Castle church with Mr. Noble. In this situation, and as sole pastor, he continued about seven years. In 1715 he removed to Andover; and afterwards to Nailsworth, where he died. Mr. Noble also died in 1726.

After a few intervening years, during which Mr. JOHN ALEXANDER frequently ministered among them, the Rev. WILLIAM VAWDRY became the pastor of the church, and continued in the work of the Lord till 1740. He appears to have been a regular and judicious minister; but as no other memorials are left of him than the names of the members received, and the baptisms administered by him, we are unable to add more. Some have doubted his evangelism; and perhaps it was in some degree questionable. His ministry, however, must have been both honoured and useful, as the old chapel, in which Mr. Thorpe preached at his first coming to Bristol, was built in his time, viz.: in 1735.

The next minister, whose writing in the little church-book continues the names of the members admitted, and the baptisms administered by him, was the Rev. PETER JILLARD, who entered on his pastoral vocation in the year 1741, and continued it for the long period of thirty-three years, as in 1774 occurs the last entry made by his hand. What was the peculiar character of his ministry, or what its results, we are unable at the present time to ascertain. It has been intimated by some, and confirmed by others, that during his pastorate, as well as in the preceding, the trumpet of the gospel gave an "uncertain sound," and the

distinguishing truths of the Divine word, concerning the person and work of the Son of God, were indistinctly conveyed, if not altogether concealed. The tendency of some of the ministers in the West of England at that day to a species of Arianism, if not Socinianism, had crept into the pulpit of Castle Green, and corrupted the doctrine delivered there. The consequence was that many left the communion, and the interests of the cause of God greatly declined. In this state of things, towards the end of Mr. Jillard's ministry, the people were anxious to obtain the services of the Rev. SAYER WALKER, a student from Homerton, to assist him in his declining years. After some correspondence, and the removal of difficulties, these were secured, and continued for about two years. In 1774, Mr. Jillard having resigned the pastorate, Mr. Walker was invited to succeed him. To this invitation, after much consideration and some hesitation, he acceded, stating that "he thought Providence had at length interposed in their favour," and that "though he felt it an important matter to build up a church which had been for a course of years in very declining circumstances," yet, thus encouraged, and especially by the "return of some of the departed members," he was willing, in dependence on superior strength, to commit himself to the undertaking. For three years he laboured among them; at the end of which time, "discouraged by the smallness of the numbers, and the indifference of some who composed the church, urging it soon to fix upon one whom it might please God to bless as an instrument of raising them to a degree of their original respectability as a congregation, and of promoting their most important interests," he sent in his resignation. He

appears to have been a good and affectionate man, who felt much the separation, as on the 4th of August, 1777, "he addressed a parting letter to the church, instead of preaching a parting sermon." But the withering influence of the late ministry had blasted the plants in the garden of the Lord.

In the same year, however, the overruling hand of Him who "walketh amidst the seven golden candlesticks" graciously appeared on their behalf, by directing them to the Rev. JOSEPH HOSKINS, of Salisbury, who, after some occasional services, and a special visit, was earnestly invited by them to take the oversight of them in the Lord. On the 3rd of December, 1777, compelled by declining strength to leave his former charge, he returned his acceptance of their call, stating that "nothing but the ill-health he had experienced at Salisbury induced him to exchange his sphere of labour, or to respond to the request of the church in Castle Green." Soon after he entered on his work, but was not publicly recognised in it till July, 1779. The devoted and evangelical ministry of this excellent man, owned and blessed by the Lord of all, was soon instrumental of reviving the cause of religion, and of gathering in to the fellowship of the gospel more "besides those who were already gathered." For the space of ten years he laboured with growing success, esteemed and loved by his own congregation, and by the citizens at large. During this time, in addition to the regular services of his chapel, which were then in the morning and afternoon, he was engaged frequently, through the summer seasons, in preaching, in different parts of the city, out of doors, from a moveable pulpit which he had prepared for such occasions. In about the middle part of his ministry also,

he opened a room for Divine service in Temple Street, on Sabbath evenings, where by his labours, and subsequently, much good was done, and many souls were brought to the knowledge of the truth. The original chapel at Castle Green was soon found to be too strait for the hearers, and, by a willing people, was enlarged and improved. Mr. Hoskins, who had published a volume of pious letters on some phases of christian experience, was also gifted, in a good degree, with a taste for sacred poetry, and was accustomed to write a hymn on the text from which he preached, which was usually sung at the close of the sermon. These hymns, which were very acceptable and precious to the people, were carefully collected, at their request, after his decease, from among his papers, and by his attached friends, the Rev. Messrs. Moody, of Warwick, and Bottomley, of Scarborough, to the number of nearly four hundred, published in a separate little volume. They contain many pious and devout effusions of genuine worship, sometimes in very happy expressions, and shew the favour and love of the heart from which they emanated. "The peculiar affection," say the editors, "that subsisted between the church and congregation of Castle Green and their late pastor, made every part of his labours to them truly acceptable. When Divine Providence was pleased to remove him by death, it was the earnest desire of surviving friends to further the publication of these hymns, which they had with so much pleasure joined in singing, both in public and private worship." The following is a part of the last hymn he ever wrote, which was sung after his last sermon, on Sabbath, the 21st September, 1788, from the words in Matt. xiii., 43,

—“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:”—

“Soon will the joyful season come,
When we shall hence remove
To heaven, our everlasting home,
To Jesus, whom we love.

“Soon will the storms of life be o'er;
Soon will the wicked cease;
And we shall reach the blissful shore
Of everlasting peace.

“Then will the Lord His children own:
Then shall the righteous shine
In glory bright as yonder sun,
In radiancy divine.

“Then will our God His saints confess
Before the world around;
And then proclaim their righteousness,
The wicked to confound.

“Then let the righteous patient wait,
Till they from earth remove:
Till God shall change their present state
To perfect bliss above.”

These joyful anticipations were in his own case soon realised; for, on the Lord's-day following, he was joining the psalmody of heaven. After a few days' illness, he rapidly sunk, and expired on Sabbath, the 28th September, 1788, when his happy spirit took its departure to the heavenly world. His dying experience was truly interesting. His last words were, “I shall now arise and shine.” Amidst great lamentation his mortal remains were conveyed to their last resting place in “the Baptist Burying Ground,” where they await the resurrection of the just. We cannot better close this brief account of this excellent man than by

inserting the inscription which was intended to be placed on his tomb, and which was considered by those who knew him "a just and pleasing account of those virtues and abilities" in the full exercise of which the Great Master said to him, "Come up hither:"—

"Here lie Interred

The mortal remains
 OF THE REV. JOSEPH HOSKINS,
 The lively, active, and successful Minister
 of the Church of Christ
 Assembling in CASTLE GREEN,
 in this City;
 WHO,
 (By the blessing of God on his labours,)
 In the course of ten years
 That he presided over the Church
 As a faithful Pastor,
 Raised it from a low and languid estate
 To a truly respectable and flourishing condition.
 Fully to declare
 The sweetness of his manners and deportment,
 The warmth and steadiness of his Friendship,
 His zeal and alacrity to do good
 To the bodies and souls of men,
 Would require more room
 Than this Monumental Table will admit.
 The soundness of his Doctrine,
 Clearly and experimentally delivered,
 And finely illustrated from Scripture :
 The melody of his voice,
 The justness of his action,
 Joined to a free and native eloquence
 Which God had given him,
 Made him a great and agreeable Preacher ;
 Whilst the boldness of his address
 And the closeness of his application
 Forced (as it were) conviction on the souls of men :
 And that amazing gift in Prayer
 With which God had blessed him,
 Raised him to the highest pitch of admiration.

That the great Master of Assemblies
 Held him in His hand
 As a Star of the first magnitude
 Cannot justly be denied :
 He lent him to the Churches
 As a bright and shining light for a season :
 He has now withdrawn him
 To realms of light and bliss above,
 Where the shafts of envy and detraction
 Cannot reach him.
 He died on the 28th day of September, 1788,
 Aged 43 years." *

Immediately after the decease of their beloved pastor, the church proceeded to give a unanimous and urgent call to their highly esteemed friend and frequent visitor, the Rev James Moody, of Warwick, of whose excellencies and efficiency as a preacher they were fully aware, and whom they judged peculiarly suitable to fill the vacant position. But in this Providence disappointed them. Though the invitation was repeated, and a deputation sent to Warwick to confirm it, Mr. Moody judged it to be the path of duty, and the will of his great Master; that he should remain, where he had been already much blessed in his ministry, and where scenes of still greater usefulness were then opening before him.

Disappointed in their hopes at Warwick, the church directed its attention in the following year to the Rev. JOHN HEY, who was labouring at Ringwood, in Hampshire, to whom, on hearing him for several Sabbaths, they gave an invitation to settle among them as their future

* How precious the memory of Mr. Hoskins was, long after his decease, may be inferred from the expression of a pious woman, a member of his church, who survived him many years, and was accustomed to say, "The first person I enquire for when I get to heaven, after my Saviour, will be dear Mr. Hoskins, to whom I was so much indebted on earth."

pastor. After due consideration, Mr. Hey complied ; and removed to Bristol to commence his stated labours in the month of December, 1789. He continued in the discharge of the duties of the pastorate for the space of about thirteen years ; when, in 1804, he closed his labours at Bristol, and left this country for America. Throughout his ministry the church continued in about the same state, though a little declining towards the end. Mr. Hey was the author of several small works during his residence on this side the Atlantic, and, by communications received from him after his departure, seems to have been useful in Philadelphia.

Deprived of the superintendence of an under shepherd, the church in Castle Green now anxiously looked upward and around for direction to another, and after hearing several ministers who visited them during the time of their destitution, they unanimously fixed on the Rev. WILLIAM THORPE, then the youthful and eloquent preacher of New Court, Carey Street, London. His occasional services had produced a deep impression on the people, and the more they knew of his preaching abilities, the more earnestly did they desire his settlement among them. This was fervently sought, and happily obtained in the close of the year 1805 ; and on the first Sabbath in 1808 this talented and eminent minister commenced his stated labours among them. From that time till the period of his death, it is well known how greatly honoured of God he was in the building up of Zion, in the enlargement and prosperity of the congregation, in all useful labours in Bristol, and in the general advocacy of the Redeemer's cause throughout the land. Happily for us, a faithful transcript of his life and

character has been preserved from the pen of his equally eminent friend and brother, the late Dr. Fletcher, of Stepney, which we willingly transfer to these pages, as furnishing all that could be desired, and more than from any other source can be obtained. It is appended to the funeral sermon preached for him by Dr. Fletcher, and published at the request of the congregation:—

“The Rev. William Thorp was born at Masbro’, near Rotherham, in Yorkshire, on the 5th day of September, 1771. His father was the Rev. John Thorp, the first pastor of the Congregational church at Rotherham, whose conversion was a most remarkable instance of the power and sovereignty of Divine grace.* He died in the prime of life, leaving a widow and seven children, of whom William was the sixth, being then about four years old. Mr. Thorp continued until his 16th year unacquainted with true religion, and addicted to the follies of youth, into which, from the natural sprightliness and ardour of his character, he entered with eagerness and alacrity. It was at this early period, and immediately after some new project of folly had been formed, that it pleased God to produce those impressions on his mind which terminated in his conversion.

* “‘A party of men were amusing themselves one day at an ale-house in Rotherham, by mimicking the Methodists. It was disputed who succeeded best, and this led to a wager. There were four performers, and the rest of the company was to decide, after a fair specimen from each. A Bible was produced, and three of the rivals, each in turn, mounted the table, and held forth in a style of irreverent buffoonery, wherein the Scriptures were not spared. John Thorp, who was the last exhibitor, got upon the table in high spirits, exclaiming, “I shall beat you all!” He opened the book for a text, and his eyes rested upon these words—“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!” These words, at such a moment, and in such a place, struck him to the heart. He became serious, and preached in earnest; and he affirmed afterwards, that his own hair stood erect at the feelings which then came upon him, and the awful denunciations which he uttered. His companions heard him with the deepest silence. When he came down, not a word was said concerning the wager; he left the room immediately, without speaking to any one, went home in a state of great agitation, and resigned himself to the impulse which had thus strangely been produced. In consequence, he joined the Methodists, and became an itinerant preacher; but he would often say, when he related this story, that if ever he preached by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was at that time.”—SOUTHEY’S LIFE OF WESLEY, vol. ii., p. 85.

"He had retired to rest after an evening spent in youthful dissipation, when he dreamed that the Judgment-day had arrived. The dream was vivid to a degree which he had never before experienced. He started from sleep, covered with a cold perspiration, and trembling violently. He retired to rest again—the dream was repeated with increased terrors: he again sprang from his bed, but after a time attempted to sleep again. A third time the dream recurred with aggravated horrors. He slept no more on that memorable night. His convictions were now deep and overwhelming; and many years after he had found peace, and had been in the ministry, has he been heard to recur to his reiterated dream with manifestly a deeper feeling of awe on his spirit.

"The impressions thus produced were deepened and rendered happily permanent, under the ministry of the late Rev. Jehoiada Brewer, towards whom he cherished sentiments of the deepest veneration and affection, and whom he always addressed in his correspondence as his 'honoured father.' Under the patronage of Mr. Brewer, he commenced occasional preaching—receiving at the same time the direction and instruction from his pastor which he was every way competent to impart. Mr. Thorp, at this period, was scarcely seventeen years old.

"At length the finger of Providence seemed to point so distinctly to the Christian ministry as Mr. Thorp's proper sphere, that all concurred in opinion that the time, early as it was, had arrived. when he should devote himself wholly to it. He accordingly accepted an invitation to Shelley, in Yorkshire;—having remained there a short time, he went to Chester, and after a residence of more than a year, he returned again to Yorkshire, and was ordained as pastor of the church of Thurlestone, near Pennistone. Having laboured at Thurlestone with distinguished success, and having left impressions, which are still vividly retained by those who survive—he accepted an invitation to New Court, Carey Street, London; having made choice of that church in preference to the congregational church at Derby, which also gave him about this time, an invitation.

"In the year 1805, Mr. Thorp received an invitation to the pastoral care over the church assembling in this place. He entered on his pastoral care in January, 1806, so that the term of his ministration in Bristol was twenty-seven years and four months.

"After Mr. Thorp had been in Bristol nine years, his popularity

and usefulness rendered a larger place necessary. This chapel was then built at an expense of several thousand pounds, and is now left to the public without any burden of debt."

In the month of March, 1815, its foundation stone was laid, imbedded in which is a brass plate, bearing the following inscription :—

"TO THE TRIUNE GOD.

"This stone, the foundation of a house consecrated to His worship, was laid on the twenty-fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifteen.

"WILLIAM THORPE, Pastor.

"JOHN WALL, WILLIAM STOCKHAM, ANDREW POPE, WILLIAM WHITE,	} Deacons.
"JOHN HOLMES, CHAIRMAN."	

(With other names of the Building Committee.)

"Here, whilst this Edifice shall stand, may the pure Doctrines of the Cross be faithfully preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

In less than a year the building was finished. It was opened on the 22nd of November, 1815, and attendant crowds manifested the deep interest felt on the occasion. In the morning the Rev. J. Angell James preached from I. Corinthians i. 22, "We preach Christ crucified," &c.* In the evening the Rev. W. Jay, of Bath, delivered an impressive discourse from the vision of the holy waters, in Ezekiel xlvii. 1-12. A large number of ministers were present; and the devotional services were conducted by the Rev. Messrs. Luke, Dr. Ryland, Roberts, Giles, and others.

* In a funeral sermon for the late R. S. May, Esq., delivered in Bridge Street Chapel, on the 2nd of January, 1859, Mr. Roper stated that this sermon of Mr. James' was instrumental of the conversion of his departed friend and deacon, who had been for so many years a useful and honoured servant of Christ, and of the church assembling in that place.

“But Mr. Thorp’s labours were not confined to Bristol. He was, in the most extensive sense, a man of public spirit. Endowed with gifts calculated to make him eminently popular, and feeling at the same time the most lively interest in the prosperity of the great religious institutions of the day, he was called into all parts of the kingdom as their public advocate. His powerful appeals rendered his services highly valuable—and his popularity continued augmenting, rather than diminishing, to the last. He was one of those who first contended for the holding of Missionary meetings out of London; and by his influence the experiment was tried in Bristol—an experiment which completely succeeded, notwithstanding the discouraging prognostications of many. Shortly after this, Mr. Thorp, at the request of the directors of the London Missionary Society, made a tour into the North, where he was engaged with the late Drs. Bogue and Waugh, in establishing the Auxiliary Societies at Manchester, Liverpool, and some other important towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

“With the character of Mr. Thorp’s ministry you are well acquainted. You well remember his clear and forcible statements—his full and rich exhibitions of Evangelical truth—his energetic appeals to the conscience—and his tender and affectionate pleadings with you. You know the unblemished purity of his life and conversation, and the living testimony which he bore to the truth of the doctrines he preached, and to the simplicity and sincerity of his own conviction.

“It was during the time of his ministry at Chester, thirty-nine years ago, that it was my happiness to become first acquainted with your honoured and beloved pastor. Never shall I forget the impressions produced on my youthful mind by his affectionate and persuasive eloquence at that early period of his ministry. There was a tone of pathos that melted and subdued the hearers, while his unaffected, and truly natural manner of delivery powerfully arrested and captivated the attention. He did not long remain at Chester—and I had not the privilege of again hearing my esteemed friend, till the period of his ministry in London. During the intervening period, there had been a rapid and powerful advancement in all the elements of mental greatness and ministerial power. The furniture of his mind was greatly enlarged by vast and extensive acquisitions. His memory, singularly accurate and retentive—was combined with a matured and discriminating judgment. His acquaintance with historical, ecclesiastical, and theological literature was minute and extensive; and on all the

great and interesting points that regard the essential verities of christian doctrine, he possessed the most luminous and comprehensive views. — His power of argumentation was of the highest order; and he had the rare and enviable faculty of investing an abstruse and complicated train of reasoning with so much of lucid order and expansive illustration as to render even a polemic discussion a source of the richest intellectual enjoyment, as well as conducive to the great ends of religious edification. His mind was eminently fitted for discursive efforts;—possessing a grasp of gigantic power on any subject that had been long the matter of his thoughtful meditation. He could perceive distinctly all the direct and collateral bearings of each successive point of evidence; no link dropped from the chain; and of all, he was in such complete possession as to bring the entire series of the most prolonged argumentation, without any artificial help, to a satisfactory and convincing termination. At the same time, there was everything that tended to confirm and perpetuate impression, in the manner as well as the matter of his discourses; a tone of majesty that could awe—and of tenderness that could melt and subdue. His discourses were eminently imbued with evangelical sentiment; he maintained the harmony and proportions of christian doctrine; and exhibited with fearlessness and fidelity ‘the whole counsel of God.’

“But let me now conduct you to the closing scene of his life.—

‘The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walk—
It is the verge of heaven.’

So it was pre-eminently with your departed pastor.

“Mr. Thorp’s health had been visibly declining for some years; the change, however, became more marked, and calculated to excite the most painful apprehensions, about the month of November last.

“Still he continued to preach occasionally, until the middle of December. His last text was, ‘Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.’

“From the time that Mr. Thorp became confined to his chamber, he manifested the most submissive and uncomplaining spirit. It was then, when his principles were tried by confinement, restlessness, and great bodily pain, that his character, according to the opinion of all who approached him, exhibited its brightest lustre.

It has been repeatedly said that the sublime simplicity of his death far outshone the most brilliant period of his life.

"On one occasion, when visited by an old and attached friend, he said, 'Well, sir, you see me a prisoner; I am bound; I am in a dungeon: but I am "a prisoner of hope:" God is good! God is good!' This he said with considerable energy, and appeared somewhat exhausted by the effort. Mrs. Thorp, perceiving this, interposed, and said, 'My dear, if you exert yourself thus, I must request Mr. — to retire, and must forbid your seeing any one.' On which his eye kindled with animation, and he added, 'I must bear my testimony to the wonderful goodness of God to a vile sinner like me: let heaven and earth—angels and men—let all created things join in the testimony, "God is good."'

"When his son, my esteemed and beloved friend, the Rev. John Thorp, arrived from Chester, in the agonizing expectation of finding his honoured father no longer among the living, the first interview was of the most affecting and overpowering character. When the first gushings of filial emotion and parental tenderness had in some measure subsided, after some pause Mr. Thorp said, 'You see me much altered. I have not been able to lie down for weeks, and I suffer much: still I have not been left alone; I have had a door opened in heaven during this affliction; I have had a glimpse of my Saviour, and oh! how animating—how delightful—how *attractive* has that glimpse been!' He then seemed, for a few moments, quite absorbed in his own musings.

"At length he resumed—'I have nothing but comforts'—(at this time he was suffering the most excruciating pain)—'I have a dear partner—a *wife* who is ready to fly on the wings of love for me—I have children who are devoted to me—a servant who would almost die for me—friends are exceedingly kind and unremitting in their attentions, and, above all, I have the presence of my Redeemer!—was there ever a miserable sinner so surrounded with mercies?'

"One evening he was very feeble, and the feeling of exhaustion was evidently distressing. In allusion to his helplessness, he said, 'I have been forty-six years a preacher of the gospel. I have travelled, on an average, several thousand miles a year: I have preached for many public institutions: I have met old friends—revived old recollections—smiled and wept at the varied memory of the past—all buoyancy, energy, and health—and *now*, what am I?—how feeble! how incompetent!' He then added, with a manner which no description can convey—'Verily, verily, I say

unto thee, when thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst." But it is not so now—no, no,—
 "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." Ah! this is very humiliating; but it must be endured, and it is well! it is well! It is my earnest and constant prayer that I may be kept from complaint.'

"On the point of submission, he was most tenderly conscientious. He seemed to dread nothing so much as a spirit of complaint and resistance.

"On one occasion he said to a friend, with evident feeling and anxiety, 'I am afraid I murmur in my affliction—I wish to be submissive, and to be preserved from complaint, and to bear patiently whatever my Heavenly Father may require of me.' It was remarked by Mrs. Thorp, who had entered the chamber, 'You don't murmur; I am sure no one ever bore affliction with more resignation and patience than *you* do.' 'Ah!' said the sufferer, 'I caught myself one day saying, "'Oh! that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest;" and this was not right. I ought to suffer without a wish of my own, and to be ~~entirely~~ resigned to God.' His friend replied, 'I would remind you, that David made use of those very words.' 'True,' he said, 'but David did not always please God: our desire should be to yield up ourselves to the will of God, whatever that will may be.'

"Once, when alone with his partner, he said, 'We are all going, and you will go; but I shall see you with Jesus.' Then, turning his brightening eye impressively on her, he said, 'Mark me! I shall know you at the resurrection.'

"On one occasion he appeared to be in deep musing—he was evidently lost to all surrounding objects—and did not know that there was any one in the room. He raised his eyes with an expression of solemn tenderness, which was most striking and affecting, and said,

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
 Which before the Cross I spend."

"Referring on one occasion to two dear and valued friends, to whom he had ever felt the strongest attachment, and whose uniform and generous friendship, through a long series of years, rendered them worthy of his high regard, he said, 'When the tablet of my memory is shattered to pieces, one fragment will be found, on which the names of —, and of —, will be perfect.'

"During the last four weeks of his life he dictated a *letter*, every week, to the church in this place, which was read at the weekly prayer-meeting that had been specially appointed to be held on his behalf. For the uniform kindness of his beloved friends at Castle Green he always expressed the warmest and most grateful estimation; and these last communications of pastoral affection were in admirable keeping with the simplicity and evangelical unction that distinguished his ministry. The letters are eminently spiritual and consolatory, and the last he dictated was written within ten hours of his decease!—It was on the subject of *prayer*, and before it was read to the little praying company assembled together, their supplications and intercessions *for him* were no longer needed! The church at Jerusalem was *praying* when Peter, their imprisoned pastor, was set at liberty;—but a nobler liberty had been granted to your beloved minister; when you were gathered together for prayer, Death, like the Angel of God, had gently touched him; the fetters of mortality had burst asunder, and his happy spirit was conducted, 'through the gate to the city'—*the new Jerusalem above!*

"His son was standing near him about eleven o'clock on the night of his departure, and heard him saying, musingly, 'A funeral procession—there they are all in mourning, and surrounding the open grave.' 'Who?' asked his son;—he added, 'The ministers, the deacons, members of the churches.' 'But,' his son interrupted, 'you do not see this.' He instantly raised his face, his eye beaming with that look of solemn energy which generally preceded any remarkable expression, 'No, my son—not literally—but in the mind's eye—it is coming, it is coming.' 'Do you fear it, father?' He instantly answered with remarkable emphasis, and with a strength of tone which produced astonishment—'No, no, I have no reason—does not HE live?'

"To one of his daughters he said—'You now see your father in the swellings of Jordan. God is dividing the waters to form a passage for me—and beyond is the promised land, into which I am about to enter.'

"A few minutes before his departure—he said, '*Hope!*'—His now bereaved widow added, "'As an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.'" He replied, '*Yes, yes!*' and immediately expired.

"And who is not prepared to exclaim, after such an illustration of the support and consolations of religion, '*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*' The calm composure

and holy confidence of such a death-bed may well be cited as a triumphant demonstration of *the truth and value of the Gospel*. Here were no equivocal raptures—no displays of doubtful emotion—no excitement to indicate the suspension or abatement of the most entire self-possession. Never in the chamber of sickness was presented a more decisive manifestation of sublimely rational confidence in the prospect of death, than your departed pastor exhibited. Every one with whom he conversed, felt the deep impression that *his religion* was a divine reality, and that the ‘glorious gospel of the blessed God’ was the enduring basis of his hope and joy! Amidst all the anxieties of parental and conjugal affection, and in the endurance of indescribable suffering, his mind had ‘heaven and peace within.’ There was not the slightest decline or aberration of mental vigour; all the circumstances of his removal were distinctly before him; he was enabled, in the majesty of resignation, to look at the approaching conflict, with all its forerunners and its consequences; he could expatiate on the *reason and grounds* of his confidence with unwavering firmness; and he felt that he could trust his principles—that the great verities of the gospel were ‘all his salvation and all his desire’—and that soon the last enemy would be overcome!”

We subjoin the account of his Funeral, and the epitaph inscribed on his mural tablet in the Chapel of Castle Green :—

“His funeral was a scene that must long be remembered. It consisted of a walking procession, which passed nearly a mile through streets everywhere crowded with spectators, and included ministers and clergymen of almost every persuasion and every rank. Among the parochial clergy who were present, were the Rev. Messrs. Biddulph, Whish, and Day, who appeared, with several Dissenting Ministers, as pall bearers. The two former of these gentlemen have announced from their respective pulpits their intention to improve an event which they regard as no mean loss to the city of Bristol, and to the Church of God.”

He was interred immediately in front of the chapel, on the right hand of the entrance door, and the following is the inscription on the mural tablet within its walls :—

“In Memory of
 THE REV. WILLIAM THORP,
 The highly esteemed Pastor
 Of this Church and Congregation
 For the period of twenty-seven years,
 Who entered into his Master's joy
 On the 7th day of May, 1833,
 Aged 62 years.
 During his Ministry this Chapel
 Was erected and dedicated to the
 TRIUNE JEHOVAH.
 He was an eloquent Man,
 And mighty in the Scriptures.”

The now destitute church, amidst the mournful recollections of their departed friend, in reference to whom they were sometimes ready to cry, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof,” were earnest in their supplications with God, and their communications with men, to find a pastor suitable for this important section of the fold, who should go in and out among them, and feed them “with knowledge and understanding in the fear of the Lord.” They were favoured with the visits of several excellent ministers on probation, respecting some of whom there were various opinions and inclinations. At length, towards the close of the year 1833, a large proportion of them were intent on obtaining the services of the Rev. JOHN JACK, then of Acre Lane Chapel, Brixton, to whom in the month of December, an invitation, signed by “three-fourths of the members,” was forwarded, requesting him to come and labour among them in holy things. As there was a considerable minority who could not unite in the invitation, it was thought by many questionable whether Mr. Jack would accede to it, and by others undesirable that he should. In his estimation, however, the

reasons in favour of it predominated, and having replied in the affirmative, he came to Bristol, and preached his first sermon as the stated pastor on Sabbath, the 23rd February, 1834. The minority thought it good, rather than disturb the unanimity which prevailed among their brethren, peacefully to withdraw, and this secession led to the erection of the chapel in Brunswick Square, and the formation of the church assembling within its walls, which has continued walking together "in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" to the present day. For some years Mr. Jack's ministry proved acceptable to the people, and there were not wanting tokens of the Divine benediction, in the accessions made to the fellowship of the church of God. But, from various causes, the interest afterwards declined. The congregation and the church both diminished in numbers: and, after labouring and hoping amidst many discouragements, in the year 1854 he felt it his duty to resign. This he finally did in the close of that year: and on Sabbath, the 24th of December, his ministry among the people terminated; not however without a substantial expression of the esteem in which he was held by many, which was presented to him on the day following.

Several months of great anxiety and earnest prayer now passed over the little remnant which was left in the spacious sanctuary of Castle Green, and earnestly did they entreat the "Chief Shepherd" now to send a Pastor after His own heart, among them. They were kindly assisted by the ministers of the city, and others, who helped them in the time of their destitution. But their eyes and hearts were unanimously fixed on the Rev. HENRY QUICK, of

Taunton, who had been a successful workman in that part of the vineyard, and was now thought eminently adapted to fill the vacant pastorate, and minister to this depressed congregation. He was well known in the city: had often been an acceptable visitor at the Tabernacle: and was judged by all a suitable and desirable labourer for this portion of the field. His occasional labours deepened this impression. An invitation was therefore given him; and at length, after much consideration, he felt it his duty to listen to the earnest entreaty of this bereft society, to undertake the work of the Lord amongst them. This he cordially did, and entered on his pastoral engagements in the month of July, 1855. His public recognition took place in a few weeks afterwards, and the following is the notice of it in the "Evangelical Magazine" for December of that year:—

"CASTLE GREEN CHAPEL, BRISTOL.

"One of the most interesting days which this venerable Sanctuary of God in the metropolis of the West has seen for many years, was on Tuesday, the 23rd of October, when the Rev. Henry Quick, late of Taunton, was publicly recognised as the pastor of the church assembling within its walls. In the morning, after united praise, the Rev. J. Gwyther, of Manchester, formerly a scholar and teacher in the Castle Green Sabbath School, read suitable portions of Scripture, and prayed. The Rev. H. I. Roper, of Bridge Street, gave a lucid statement of our principles and practices as Protestant Nonconformists of the Congregational order. The Rev. S. Luke, of Clifton, inquired of the church and its pastor as to the providential steps by which they had been brought into such a relation; and deeply interesting was it to hear the faith and prayer by which the proceedings of the one had been characterized, and the substantial reasons offered by the other for accepting their invitation to take the 'oversight of them in the Lord.' The Rev. T. Haynes, of Cheltenham, formerly Minister of Brunswick Chapel, and Mr. Quick's pastor, presented fervent supplication for the

Divine blessing on the union; and the Rev. N. Haycroft, of Broadmead, affectionately and powerfully admonished both on the reciprocal duties of ministers and people in order to the prosperity of the cause of God.

"In the evening a large social tea meeting was held in the spacious school-room, under the chapel, in furtherance of the objects of the day. The Rev. M. Caston opened the proceedings by prayer. The pastor gave an appropriate introductory address. The Rev. Messrs. Probert, Hartland, Brown, and Pratt, spoke on different topics selected for the occasion; and the Rev. W. Wild concluded with the apostolic benediction.

"Deep was the interest felt by the numerous assembly. The remembrance of former days was awakened; and, amidst hopeful prospects for the future, the fervent aspiration ascended from the hearts of many, 'O Lord, we beseech Thee, send now prosperity.'"

From that time to the present, Mr. Quick has been diligently employed in promoting the interests of vital godliness among the people of his charge, and it is gratifying to observe the measure of the Divine blessing which has followed. The vacant pews are occupied, and the congregation has assumed its pristine appearance. The ministry of the word has been attended with power from on high, and numbers have sought admission to the church of God. The Sabbath School has been revived and enlarged, and Bible classes, conference meetings for the young, and other means of usefulness, have been greatly blessed by the Lord of all. Recently, commodious rooms have been provided at the back of the chapel for these and like services; and pastor and people have abundant reason to hope that He "who remembered them in their low estate, and whose mercy endureth for ever," is in the midst of them, fulfilling his word, and confirming it by signs following.

This venerable christian society has long been one of the bulwarks and towers of our Zion, and useful in its past

history in no small degree, for defence and attack, in relation to the territories of darkness around. Not a few have gone forth from its fellowship to preach the "everlasting gospel," or plead in other ways for its truth, both at home and abroad. Amongst these may be mentioned, with satisfaction and gratitude, such men as Dr. Vaughan, late President of the Lancashire Independent College, and the Rev. J. Jukes, of Bedford (who were initiated by Mr. Thorp into the ministry), Messrs. Pugsley, of Stockport, Gwyther, of Manchester, Brown, late of Long Ashton, Pope, of Leamington, Waldo, of Throop, and others, known in the church on earth, or now serving in the temple of heaven.

So that the friends of Castle Green, in the review of their long and eventful history, may devoutly say, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."



Pastors.

Hicks and others	to 1670.
Thompson	1670 to 1675.
Way	1676 to 1680.
(Nine years, various.)	
Noble	1689 to 1726.
Fownes (co-pastor)	1708 to 1715.
Alexander (co-pastor)	1516 to 1726.
Vawdry	1728 to 1740.
Jillard	1741 to 1775.
Walker	1772 to 1777.
Hoskins.....	1777 to 1788.
Hey	1789 to 1804.
Thorpe	1806 to 1833.
Jack	1834 to 1854.
Quick	1855.



CHAPTER VI.

BRIDGE STREET CHAPEL.

"The hand of the Lord was with them : and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."

"TIME OF FAVOUR. — SIX CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES. — ORIGIN OF THIS. — MR. WEEKS. — HIS USEFULNESS. — AT ST. JAMES'S BACK. — LICENSE. — IMPRISONMENT. — TRIAL. — NUMEROUS LABOURS. — CHAPEL DEMOLISHED. — PREACHES OUT OF DOORS. — TUCKER STREET MEETING. — DR. CALAMY. — MR. KENTISH. — CATCOTT. — GOUGH. — FURZE. — JONES. — FISHER. — REYNER. — HARSON. — WRIGHT. — HARWOOD. — JAMES. — DAVIES. — NEW CHAPEL IN BRIDGE STREET. — LOWELL. — LEIFCHILD. — LEGGE. — ROPER.

It was one of the remarkable dispensations of Divine Providence towards the city of Bristol, and an intimation that the Lord had "much people" to gather to Himself in it, that about the middle of the seventeenth century He poured out His Spirit upon it, and awakened many to an earnest solicitude in relation to their spiritual and everlasting concerns. The time, yea, "the set time to favour Zion" was come, and beneath the faithful preaching of His word, and by the holy lives and united prayers of His people, not a few were brought out of Nature's darkness

into His marvellous light. A fire was kindled, and rapidly did it spread. The sword of the Spirit was unsheathed, and mighty was the conflict that ensued. The dominion of error and vice, of ungodliness and formality, was invaded on every side; and alarmed and furious did their emissaries become. They threatened: they disturbed: they imprisoned: they fined: but amidst all, the work advanced; the little leaven cast into the lump diffused itself; and the good seed of the Kingdom sprung up and bore fruit, "in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some a hundred-fold." The word of the Lord could not be bound. In various parts of the city it triumphed. And notwithstanding the fiery persecutions which they had to endure, the friends of the Redeemer multiplied; they encouraged each other; they met in different places; and by their firmness, union, and zeal, defeated all the purposes of their adversaries. The more they were oppressed, the more they increased; so that before the year 1670, there were six separate christian churches formed in the city, viz: three Baptist, two Independent, and one Presbyterian. "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." To the last-named of these churches we now refer.

Something like its sister church in the Castle, the time and place of the origin of this christian society are not distinctly recorded; nor can we now exactly ascertain the locality, or the hour, in which its members first united their hands and their hearts in the service of their one Lord and Saviour. Most likely, however, it arose out of some of those numerous meetings for prayer and mutual edification which were accustomed to be held when persecution raged, and opposition from without drove the sheep of Christ into

the fold, and more firmly united their hearts one to another. It may have been about the year 1660, or a little later, that the fraternity was first formed; but no minister is mentioned till, all at once, we find a license granted by King Charles II., in 1672, in pursuance of the indulgence to Protestant Dissenters he had then yielded, to "Mr. John Weeks, of the Presbyterian persuasion, to be a teacher of the congregation allowed by us in a room, or rooms, in the house of John Lloyd, lying on St. James's Back, in the city of Bristol: "* and soon after, in another record, we read that the congregation assembling there, or in some other place, to which the license was to extend, "consisted, as did also that of the Castle, and two of the Baptists, each of many hundreds of people, including the members and hearers," and that "they had public places, whereto the people did resort, as common as the public places called churches."†

* The identical License now hangs in the Vestry of Bridge Street Chapel, and is as follows :—

"CHARLES R.

"CHARLES, by the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c., to all Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, and other our Officers and Ministers, civil and military, whom it may concern, greeting :

"In pursuance of our Declaration, on the 15th of March, 1671-2, we do permit and license JOHN WEEKS, of the Presbyterian persuasion, to be a Teacher of the Congregation allowed by us, in a room or rooms in the house of John Lloyd, lying on St. James's Back, in the city of Bristol, for the use of such as do not conform to the Church of England, who are of the persuasion commonly called Presbyterians; with further license and permission to him, the said JOHN WEEKS, to teach in any place licensed and allowed by us, according to our Declaration.

"Given at our Court at Whitehall, the 9th day of April, 1672.

"JOHN WEEKS, Teacher."

"ARLINGTON.

† "Broad Mead Records," p. 214.

This Mr. JOHN WEEKS was a noble and excellent man, and of far more importance in the "Kingdom of God and of Christ" than the prevaricating monarch who had granted him a license to preach imagined him to be. He had been a regularly educated and ordained minister of the Church of England, fixed at Buckland Newton, in Dorsetshire; and by the passing of the "Act of Uniformity," in 1662, was ejected, like many others, because he would not declare his unfeigned assent and consent to everything which human authority saw fit to impose in matters of religion and the worship of God. After his ejection he came to Bristol, and ministered to this congregation; which, very soon after his arrival, attracted by the eloquence and power of his preaching, amounted, it is recorded, "usually to about fifteen hundred people." Many were the hardships which he had to endure from the relentless spirit of persecution, but he bore them all with great meekness, patience, and courage, and in the spirit of his Divine Master overcame evil with good. He was often called to officiate in other places besides his own meeting-house, and embraced every opportunity of diffusing the message of salvation. "On one occasion he was preaching at Frome Woodlands, when some informers came who had vowed to shoot him, but he directed his discourse to them with such majesty and boldness that they rode away without giving him any disturbance. He was twice imprisoned six months for his nonconformity, during which he preached out of the prison windows, and had many of the common people constantly to hear him. He was once carried to prison from his pulpit, where, while he was preaching, the officers came in and demanded by what authority he preached? He there-

upon clapped his hand on his Bible, and said, 'By the authority of God, and of this Book.' They ordered him to come down. He desired they might conclude with prayer, which they yielded to, standing by uncovered. He prayed so heartily for the King and the Government that one of his friends, after prayer, asking a clergyman who came with the officers what he had to say against such a man, he replied, 'Truly nothing; only such men eat the bread out of our mouths.' Mr. Weeks was a man of great piety and prudence, and very remarkable for his courage. It was said of him, 'That he could bear anything from his enemies, but not so from his friends.' His spirit was elevated by their zeal. He was very submissive to the Divine will in sore pains, and when reduced to great straits. He never complained of God, but was abundant in blessing and admiring Him; and would rejoice that he could find his heart inclined to love God, even when under manifold afflictions at once. He was charitable beyond his ability. He was as popular a preacher as most in England, and remarkably fervent in expostulating with sinners; and took pains with his sermons to the last. He was a minister out of the pulpit as well as in it; a most affectionate sympathizing friend; and one who became all things to all men."*

During the former part of the ministry of this laborious man, that is, till about the year 1685, the congregation was accustomed to assemble, according to the words of the licence, "in a room or rooms in St. James's Back," which is supposed, by competent authority, to have been an old

* Nonconformists' Memorial, vol. i.

chapel belonging once to an order of Monks, situated on the west side of that narrow street, and overlooking the river, which still, in a confined stream, runs between the houses. There, for about twelve years, the hallowed exercises of prayer and praise were conducted, and the glad tidings of gospel grace sounded from the earnest lips of the preacher within walls which had once been devoted to the purposes of will-worship and superstition. But even in that secluded retreat the peaceful followers of Christ were not suffered to continue long without the merciless invasion and cruel treatment of their determined enemies. The Bishop, the Mayor, and the unprincipled attorney to whom we have referred in a former article, employed their utmost power to interrupt the worshippers, to disperse their assemblies, and to exclude the flock from the green pastures of salvation which they there enjoyed. For these purposes, spies were usually engaged. On one occasion, "having gone to Mr. Weeks' meeting-house, and finding the people praying and praising God, they secured many, and sent them to prison." On another, as a provision against these informers, to whose molestations they were constantly exposed, "Mr. Weeks' people shut up one of their doors, and instead of a curtain, as at Broad Mead, they put up a wainscot board in a convenient place, behind which they placed their minister, that he might not be seen, but distinctly heard."* Such were the means to which they were compelled to resort to enjoy their beloved privileges, and to secure themselves from the violence and abuses of "the wrath of man."

* "Broad Mead Records," p. 227.

"Upon the 14th day of February, 1675," says the faithful narrator, "the Lord's-day following Mr. Thompson's commitment, the Mayor, his sergeants, and two Aldermen came to Mr. Weeks' meeting, and finding him preaching, they carried him away, and committed him to the custody of a chief constable until the morrow. Then he and Mr. Hardcastle (the minister of Broadmead) were brought before the Mayor to the Tolzey, where the oaths in the Corporation Act were tendered to them. But, as they would not take them, they were sent to Newgate prison, to Mr. Thompson." This was the imprisonment during which, as we have already related, the angel of the Lord came to deliver Mr. Thompson by death, who expired whilst his beloved brother, Mr. Weeks, was praying at his side.

"In the month of March, 1675, two of the brethren, and the two pastors above named (Hardcastle and Weeks) had removed themselves by *habeas corpus* to London, to have their cause tried at the King's Bench, believing, as they did, that their commitment to prison in Bristol had not been according to law. The trial, however, as might be expected, issued against them. Through the instigation of evil counsellors, and the false witness of the Mayor's son, who had been sent up to Westminster on the occasion, and who swore falsely, they were remanded back to Bristol, and with an order that the Sheriff should provide a better prison for them."* In that state of unmerited suffering they remained till the six months were expired, and then, in June, were permitted to return to their respective homes. No sooner was this liberty enjoyed than they began again,

* "Broad Mead Records," p. 240.

as other sufferers before them had done, "to teach and to preach Jesus Christ," and to meet with their attached flocks in the name, and in the house, of their Lord. But soon again the ruthless hand of persecution arrested them. Their public assemblies were disturbed. Numbers of the worshippers were imprisoned, or fined. The ministers were annoyed, insulted, and obliged to flee for their safety. Mr. Weeks was deprived of his liberty a second time; but by an appeal to a higher tribunal was found now to have been falsely accused, and was discharged. This permitted him to resume his work. He ceased not to be about his Master's business. In various places besides his own meeting-house, as he had opportunity, he preached the Word with no small measure of success: and so exasperated were his opposers that, on the 13th December, 1681, "John Helliard, who came from London the night before, Captain Edward Arundell, and his lieutenant, and many constables of James' Ward, &c., went, between four and five in the evening, to Mr. Weeks' meeting-house, on St. James' Back, and there, after many people were come in, expecting to hear a lecture-sermon as usual at that time, Helliard and his company commanded them to depart; and then ordered a smith and several other labourers he had provided to pull down the pulpit and the pews; and they broke and tore them all to pieces as fast as they could. As this was doing, much rabble and boys came in, and Helliard encouraged them to help, and said he would send up their names to the King, and they should have twenty pounds a-piece. So about fourteen of the labourers, and the rabble, continued late at night breaking down the galleries, and tore the very windows to pieces; and the rabble carried away the plunder as fast

as they could, so that a hundred pounds would not make it good again.”*

Soon after, probably in 1682, by a similar infuriated multitude, the house of God was entirely demolished, and the peaceful flock scattered from its beloved home. They met for some time, as best they could, in different places, to enjoy the privileges of christian fellowship, and to strengthen each other in the name of the Lord. “The fields,” “a vale on Durdham Down,” “Brislington common,” and “Kingswood,” are mentioned as places to which they were accustomed to resort for the worship of their God and Saviour, and where they hoped the evil eye of persecution would scarcely discover them. In this, however, they were disappointed. Even here were they pursued, and by wicked men interrupted and abused. At length, in 1685 or 1686,

- they were enabled to obtain possession of an old theatre, which stood in Tucker Street, on the south side of Bristol Bridge, and which they converted into a house for the service of the Most High. It stood “nearly in the centre of Bath Street, almost opposite the gateway of the Talbot Inn, and was of Gothic structure. The entrance into it was through a passage, nearly opposite the Pilgrim public-house, at the end of which was a flight of steps leading directly into the meeting, the door of which was in the centre. The pulpit faced the entrance. It was a large building with three galleries, capable of containing above a thousand persons, and was attended by a respectable congregation.”†

Such was the Presbyterian meeting-house of that day, for to this denomination, viz., the English Presbyterians, did

* “Broad Mead Records,” p. 434.

† Griffiths’ Account.

Mr. Weeks and his people belong. Here it was that in the latter years of his life he exercised his ministry, and attracted a goodly multitude around him. Here it was also that Mr., afterwards the learned Dr. EDMUND CALAMY, then the popular young preacher of London, came to his help, and for some few months, in 1694, laboured with him. He was earnestly intreated to fix his abode in Bristol, and become the stated assistant of Mr. Weeks, but from various considerations saw it his duty to decline the invitation. The advancing years and growing infirmities of the venerable pastor, however, rendered it indispensable that permanent assistance should be secured. This was cheerfully undertaken by his attached people; and immediately after Mr. Calamy's departure, Mr. JOSEPH KENTISH, a fellow student of Mr. C., whom he had strongly recommended, from the Academy at Islington, was invited down. After a few Sabbaths' labours he was cordially requested to become co-pastor, and accepted the invitation. But Mr. Weeks's remaining years were but few. He had laboured long; and suffered much; and must soon be at rest. In 1698 his strength rapidly declined; a distemper came on; and numerous symptoms indicated that his end was nigh. "Through all his sickness," it is said, "he discovered a most divine temper, and was serene and joyful in the approach of death." The last enemy came and found this servant of God fully prepared. On the 23rd of November, 1698, he breathed his last, and his emancipated spirit entered into the joy of its Lord.*

* Calamy, in his "Account of his own Life and Times," gives an interesting detail of his visit to Bristol. He says of Mr. Weeks, "I found him a very frank, sincere, and plain-hearted man, and as popular a preacher as most in

In the same year, and soon after the decease of his honoured predecessor, Mr. Kentish was invited to become the sole pastor of the destitute flock, and with this invitation saw it his duty to comply. He was a branch of an excellent and honoured Nonconformist family in the county of Durham, whose members had suffered much on account of their attachment to the cause of truth and liberty. His father was ejected from Overton, in Hampshire; and after that was pastor of a society assembling in Cannon Street, London, where, whilst occupied in the faithful discharge of his ministry, "he was taken up at Mr. Janeway's, and confined for some time in the Marshalsea prison." Mr. Kentish, the son, was a devoted and useful minister, and laboured with much acceptance for about six years in Bristol. "At first," says Calamy, in his "Life and Times," "he did not very well like it, but was reconciled to it by degrees, and proved a great blessing to that city. He continued assisting good Mr. Weeks for the remainder of his life, and then succeeded him as pastor of the church, continuing such to his death, 1704."*

England. He had an unwieldy body, broken with infirmities; but a mighty voice, and a great spirit. He had a most affecting way of pleading for God with sinners, and of setting forth the odiousness of sin, to make it detested. He had a wonderful interest in the affections of his people, to whom God had made him exceeding useful; and he was of such a temper that I had a fair prospect of much satisfaction and comfort in being his fellow labourer. The people under his care were numerous and wealthy, and in all appearance disposed to be very kind to him that should fix among them, if generally agreeable. They appeared well pleased with my preaching, and very desirous I should stay with them, and pressed me with great earnestness."—Vol. I. p. 314.

* "Mr. Joseph Kentish," says the Author of the excellent Samuel Pomfret's Life, "preached for some in London with great acceptance, and was afterwards pastor in Bristol to as large a congregation as any in England. He received the first impressions of his seriousness under the ministry of Mr. Pomfret."

On the decease of Mr. Kentish, Mr. JOHN CATCOTT, about the year 1705, was selected to be the minister of the congregation, and continued in the discharge of his work, though frequently interrupted by affliction, for the space of about fourteen years. Five years after the commencement of his ministry, it was thought desirable to associate a co-pastor with him, and Mr. STRICKLAND GOUGH was unanimously chosen to that office. He was a son of the Rev. William Gough, rector of Inkipin, in Berkshire, a man of good reputation and learning, who was ejected by the Act of Uniformity from his rectory, and afterwards exercised his ministry, with great acceptance, at various places in Wiltshire. Though much persecuted by the severe and unjust laws of the times, he sought to maintain a conscience void of offence towards God and man, and, "for his courteous and genteel behaviour," says Palmer, "was highly respected in the neighbourhood in which he lived." He brought up two of his sons as scholars, and sent them both to Oxford. Mr. Strickland Gough was one of them, who came to Bristol with all the advantages of an education at that celebrated seat of literature. In 1710 he entered on his work as joint-pastor of the congregation assembling in Tucker Street, and prosecuted it with much acceptance and profit to the flock till the year 1717. During his ministry there were many pleasing tokens of the Divine blessing on his labours, and of the esteem in which he was held by the people. At one period they seriously thought of erecting a new edifice for worship on a suitable spot of ground which offered itself in Small Street, and generous offers of money without interest were made to realize the design; but the purpose was given up in consequence of the house in which they were

assembled being offered for sale, and the congregation becoming its purchasers. Mr. Gough was a studious and diligent man in the discharge of his duties, and laboured with much assiduity for the good of his charge, and of the citizens of Bristol. At the commencement of his ministry he published a volume of "Sermons on Effectual Calling, and other important subjects, tending to promote practical religion." It was his delight also to improve the public dispensations of Providence as they occurred, for the benefit of his hearers; and several discourses were preached, and afterwards printed, by him on such occasions. We give the titles of them in a note below.* After having thus served God and his generation for about ten years, his heavenly Master called him to his rest; and he, and his fellow-labourer Mr. Catcott, appear to have fallen asleep in Jesus within a short time of each other; but of their decease and funeral no particular record remains.

Being now left destitute of pastoral superintendence (excepting what remained amidst the enfeebled years and infirmities of the senior co-pastor, Mr. Catcott yet surviving), the members of the society assembled for consultation and prayer, and deputed a committee of their number to obtain

* 1. "Sermons on Effectual Calling, &c., 1709. Thirteen Sermons. Dedicated to Lady Levett."

2. "A Discourse occasioned by the Small-Pox and Plague now reigning in Europe."

3. "A Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Joseph Denham, at Gloucester, December 8, 1713; from Titus i. 9."

4. "A Sermon occasioned by the Happy Accession of King George I. to the Throne of Great Britain, 1714, from Isaiah xlix. 23. Dedicated to Sir William Ashurst."

5. "A Sermon preached January 20, 1715, being a Day of Thanksgiving for his Majesty King George's Peaceable Settlement on the Throne. Text, 2 Chron. ix. 8."

suitable supplies for the pulpit, with a view to another minister. This was done; and their choice ultimately fell on the Rev. WALTER FURZE, of Chumleigh, in Devonshire, who was unanimously invited to become their pastor. The invitation was accepted by him, and he entered on his engagements, amidst pleasing prospects of usefulness, in April, 1718; but in consequence of declining health and strength was obliged to resign his situation, and bid farewell to his flock, in October of the following year. In 1719 Mr. Catcott died.*

Immediately the bereaved church met again to inquire of each other, and their Lord, what he would have them do; and their attention was directed to Mr. JOSHUA JONES, who laboured amongst them but for a short period. At the close of his engagements, a united and earnest invitation was given to the Rev. WILLIAM FISHER, who felt it his duty, in dependence on Divine aid, to accept the vacant pastorate, and in September, 1720, entered on its avocations. He continued in his work for about twelve years,

* There was a curious and somewhat exciting conflict about this time in Bristol, between the principles of intolerance and liberty, arising out of the progress made in favour of the latter since the accession of George I. to the Throne, which is thus noticed by Bogue and Bennett, in their "History of Dissenters," vol. iii., p. 141:—"The Parliament pursued its enlightened and liberal course (1718) by passing another Bill for the extension of religious liberty. An Act of the 12th year of the reign of the late Queen Anne contained a clause which breathed all the unchristian bigotry of that period, by declaring that no person should be capable of being guardian for the poor in the city of Bristol, who should not have taken the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. This clause, which excluded the Dissenters of Bristol, a highly respectable and wealthy body, from all influence in managing the funds for the poor, to which they so largely contributed, was now repealed. But deeply as the Act was stained with barbarian prejudices, the Bishop of Bristol was not ashamed to become its advocate, and to use all his influence both to procure a petition against the repeal, and to induce several Lords to join him in his opposition. The Dissenters, however, triumphed, and left the Bishop and his coadjutors to record their own disgrace in the form of a protest."

when, in 1732, his life and his labours terminated, and he received "the recompense of the reward" which they shall enjoy who serve the Lord Christ.

It seems to have been the practice of this christian society at this period, in accordance with the example of Apostolic times, to have sought and enjoyed a plurality, or rather a duality, of elders, to take the oversight of them in the Lord: for again, soon after the induction of Mr. Fisher to his office, another fellow-labourer was obtained in the person of Mr. KIRBY REYNER, who, in 1721, settled as co-pastor among them. He belonged to a family illustrious for their principles and sufferings in the preceding century, and was probably grandson of the excellent Edward Reyner, of Cambridge University, who was ejected from Lincoln in 1662, a man of special note both as a scholar and a divine.* Mr. Kirby Reyner was well known to the celebrated Dr. Lardner, who, after his decease, published a volume of his discourses, entitled "Select Sermons on Practical Subjects," and says of him, "Mr. Kirby Reyner was born near Wakefield, in Yorkshire. He studied academical learning under Mr. Jollie, at Attercliffe, near Sheffield, in the same county. At his first setting out in the ministry, he was for about four years assistant in the English church at Amsterdam. After his return to England he lived for some time in two respectable families,—one in Kent, the other in Cambridge-shire,—in both which places he had the opportunity of conversing with some gentlemen of the truest taste for politeness and learning; and Mr. Reyner's conversation

* See an interesting account of him in Palmer's "Nonconformists' Memorial." Vol. ii., p. 149.

was always agreeable to gentlemen of that character. In the year 1721 he settled at Bristol, as assistant to Mr. William Fisher, pastor of the congregation in Tucker Street. Upon the death of Mr. Fisher, in 1732, Mr. Reyner was chosen to succeed him in the pastoral office, in which station he continued till the 4th day of June, 1744, when he exchanged this world for a better."

A little previous to the death of Mr. Reyner, the Rev. DANIEL HARSON was engaged to assist him in ministerial labours, and, in 1744, was invited to become the sole pastor. This good man entered on his engagements amidst very pleasing prospects, and in a spirit,—as his written answer to the call, still preserved, will testify,—eminently becoming the gospel of Christ. He pursued his labours, for nearly fourteen years, with exemplary assiduity and considerable success; but at the close of that period was compelled to resign, in consequence of an affection of the lungs, which entirely forbade him to engage in the exercise of public speaking. Most tenderly and deeply did he feel it; but, after long-cherished hopes of amendment, bowed with christian submission to the Divine dispensation, and bade farewell to a work which he sincerely loved. He was unable publicly to take leave of his people, but his letter of resignation breathes a spirit of affectionate regard, and of solicitude for the cause of God and truth among them. They appear to have received it most honourably; and through the influence of some of their number, and the care of a gracious Providence, he was provided for by election to the office of Collector of the Customs of the Port of Bristol, in which situation he continued till his death.

On the 20th of August, 1756, the Rev. JOHN WRIGHT received a cordial invitation from the people to become their minister, and on the 9th of October replied in the affirmative to that request. He entered on his labours without delay, but had not long been engaged in them when the loss of his voice interrupted his services, and he was obliged to suspend them. As hopes were entertained that it might be restored, he was assisted in his pulpit engagements for several years by frequent occasional supplies, and remained in the office of pastor till 1765. But the affection of his voice continuing to increase, and ultimately proving invincible, he resigned his connection with the congregation in that year, and afterwards applied himself to the study of medicine. For a considerable period he practised as a physician in the city, having received a degree; and attained to some eminence in his profession. To the poor he was exceedingly attentive and kind. By all he was respected and esteemed. And generally was his loss deplored, when, at an advanced age, in 1794, he fell in that war, "in which there is no discharge." He was succeeded in the pastoral office in Tucker Street, by the Rev. Dr. EDWARD HARWOOD, who was chosen in 1765 or 6, and continued till the year 1772.

We have now to recur to a matter for lamentation, by adverting to the mournful fact of the spread of Arian, and, in some instances, Socinian doctrines, which invaded many of the fairest, and once most flourishing churches of the land, at about the middle period of the last century. The societies in Bristol, as we have already mentioned in the account of Castle Green, were not exempt from the evil, which spread like a desolation wherever it came. There is

much reason to fear that the two ministers of Tucker Street last named, were infected with the poison, and its withering influence was soon felt on all that was good and holy in the heritage of God. The Rev. John Wright, it is affirmed, was "inclined to Arianism;" and the Rev. Dr. Harwood, his successor, is said to have published a pamphlet against the personal deity of our adorable Lord, which was answered by Mr. Newton, at that time pastor of the church meeting in the Pithay. Soon after this it was that he resigned his office. Dr. Wright also, the physician, after his retirement from the congregation in Tucker Street, appears regularly to have attended the ministry of his brother, the Rev. Thomas Wright, then officiating at the chapel in Lewin's Mead. The intimacy which, moreover, existed between the respective congregations, and the frequent exchange of ministerial services, indicate an agreement where it could least be desired: and the lamentable consequences begun now to appear, in the want of vital, active piety amongst the people, and the discontinuance of the ordinary privileges of church meetings, and meetings for social prayer, in the midst of them. The cause is known by its effects. The thorn does not produce "grapes," nor the thistle "figs." The briar will not yield the fragrance and beauty of the "myrtle;" nor will anything but evangelical truth and doctrine, accompanied with the Spirit's influence, adorn and fructify the garden of the Lord. It was exemplified in more instances than one at Bristol. The church of Tucker Street declined in numbers, piety, and energy. The spirit of controversy took the place of the spirit of devotion and love. Some of the members left: others were dissatisfied: and most of them in vain looked up to the pulpit for the

spiritual nutriment which once their souls, within the precincts of their beloved sanctuary, had enjoyed. The ways of Zion mourned. Few came to her solemn feasts; and “Ichabod” had well nigh been inscribed on her walls.

But, through the favourable disposals of Divine Providence, in the removal of the ministers to whom we have referred, and in the introduction to this sphere of the vineyard of the Rev. THOMAS JANES, the night of weeping gradually departed, and joy beamed in the morning. This good man was invited to assume the pastorate in September, 1772, and in the same month commenced his ministerial labours. The ordination did not take place till May, 1774, when the Rev. Benjamin Fawcett, M.A., of Kidderminster, preached, and the Rev. Andrew Kinsman, of Plymouth, gave the charge, amidst circumstances which encouraged the people, and filled the young minister’s heart with joy. His public recognition, however, was but a prelude to his death; and the services of the one were soon followed by those of the other; for before twelve months had elapsed he had preached his last sermon, and heaved his last sigh. He died on the eighth of February, 1775, aged only twenty-eight years. He left behind him a volume of “Nine Sermons on several Important Subjects:” and a printed elegy commemorated his virtues, and expressed the respect entertained for him.

On the 19th of March, 1775, the destitute church and congregation united to invite the Rev. JAMES DAVIES, of Wotton-under-Edge, to become their pastor; and on the 24th of the following month he acceded to their invitation. Mr. Davies was a native of Curreria, in Carmarthenshire, the son of the Rev. Rice Davies, of that place. His

brother was the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Davies, of Fetter Lane, London. He received his education in the Academy at Carmarthen, and came thence to Wotton-under-Edge in 1767, where he was ordained to the work of the ministry, and commended to the Divine benediction, by the united prayers of the neighbouring Presbytery. There he laboured for about the space of nine years; and felt much on parting from a flock which he loved, and by whom he was beloved also. But the call to a larger and more important sphere of exertion brought him to the city of Bristol, and here he commenced his work in the summer of 1775. His ministry appears to have been attended with a good degree of success, as well as with much esteem among the people. During the course of it, the present commodious and substantial sanctuary in Bridge Street was erected, the particulars of which are thus recorded:—"About the year 1784 or 5, an Act of Parliament was obtained for taking down Tucker Street, and improving that part of the city. In consequence of this, the congregation assembling there was obliged to sell the old meeting-house, and to provide themselves with another. After looking around, and endeavouring to obtain a suitable site, they fixed upon that on which the present building stands, and deemed it the most eligible spot which at that period could be procured. Having obtained the ground, and laid the foundation, they proceeded with zeal in the erection of the structure. For a time they were obliged to suspend the work, in consequence of a gentleman of high church principles having entered a process at law against the congregation, alleging that the building was on ground which pertained to the church. But he did not succeed in his attempt to frustrate the design, which was

carried on and completed: and on the 24th of August, 1786 (Bartholomew day,—a day ever to be remembered among Protestant Dissenters), the house of God was opened, and dedicated to the worship of the Most High, amidst the rejoicings and thanksgivings of his people.* On this memorable occasion, the Rev. Mr. Manning commenced the services with an introductory address, prayer, and reading the Scriptures. The Rev. Mr. Moffatt prayed, Mr. Davies, of London, preached from Zech. vi. 13, "Even He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory," and the Rev. Mr. Ashbourne, of Gloucester, concluded. The sermon contained the following address to the congregation: "It was a good design you engaged in to erect this building as a house for God: the zeal and perseverance with which you pursued it deserve commendation: and it is a matter of joy that your exertions have been attended with success. Nor can it fail to afford you pleasure, whenever you assemble here, that you are now provided with so convenient a place of worship; yet let me caution you in the most serious manner not to content yourselves with this, but let your zeal continue for the success of that spiritual building which the Redeemer has engaged to raise as a temple for the Lord." That building, it is hoped, continued to rise. Mr. Davies pursued his ministry with assiduity and care for about ten years afterwards, though often interrupted, towards the end of that period, by great bodily weakness, and asthmatic complaint. At length, in 1797, he was obliged to retire to Bath, hoping that its healing waters would have counteracted disease, and renewed his

* Griffiths' Account.

health. But his strength failed. His disorder increased, and on the 16th of December, in that year, he breathed, in that city, his last. On the 22nd he was brought home for interment in the burial ground in the Brunswick Square; and on the 31st the Rev. Dr. Ryland preached his funeral sermon from 2 Timothy ii. 10. Many made lamentation over him. "He was sincerely deplored," says a record of the time, "by his friends, and in him the church lost a very able pastor. He was a gentleman, a scholar, and a christian." In the chapel in which he laboured is a mural tablet, erected by his people, with the following inscription:—

"In Memory of
THE REV. JAMES DAVIES,
Who was for more than twenty-two years
The faithful and affectionate Pastor of this Church.
He departed this life, esteemed and lamented,
On the 16th of December, 1797,
Aged 65 years.

This Chapel was erected during his ministry (the congregation having formerly met in Tucker Street), and was opened for public worship on the 24th of August, 1786."

The only printed work of Mr. Davies, of which we are aware, is a Fast Sermon, preached at Bridge Street, February 28th, 1794, entitled "Britain's Privileges and Duties."

Notwithstanding the general excellence of Mr. Davies' character, and the high esteem in which he was held at his decease, it does not appear that the church of Christ at Bridge Street had been in a very prosperous condition during his ministry, or that many had been added to the number of its members. Indeed, it required some time to elapse, and a considerable course of evangelical labours,

to counteract the deleterious influence of former impressions, and to recover the congregation from the cold and withering effect of those ministrations which had preceded his. In addition to this, the asthmatic complaint and frequent infirmities under which Mr. D. had long suffered, had incapacitated him for the energetic discharge of pastoral duties, and for attending regularly on those social meetings for conference and prayer on which the prosperity of a church so much depends. These had, in part, if not altogether, declined. And being now left destitute of pastoral superintendence entirely, and for nearly eighteen months dependent upon occasional supplies, the cause of religion in a measure retrograded, and the flame of christian piety and love, which once burnt so brightly on this altar of the British Israel, was shorn of its lustre, and diminished in its power. It was there : but it wanted to be ministered to, with renewed diligence, by human hands, and lighted up afresh from above.

This was soon graciously done. There was an excellent young evangelist, whom God had endowed with gifts and grace in somewhat more than an ordinary measure, at that time labouring at Woodbridge, in Suffolk, as pastor of a church and congregation to which he had been ministering for a few years. He was a native of Birmingham, born in the year 1759, in which town he was brought up in the engraving business. But having been called in early life by divine grace, and discovering talents for the ministry, he became a preacher in Mr. Wesley's connexion, and engaged in itinerant service in the neighbourhood in which he lived. He was for some time also situated at Brighouse, in Yorkshire: but his mind becoming more imbued with

Calvinistic views and sentiments, he accepted an invitation to settle at Woodbridge as a congregational pastor. Whilst there, his preaching became attractive and popular. He delivered, and printed by request, several separate discourses, and soon became known beyond the sphere of his immediate ministrations. Amongst other places at which he was invited to supply, was the Tabernacle at Bristol, where good men used in those days to come to scatter broadcast the seed of the kingdom, and to gain refreshment and joy to their own souls. Arising out of his engagement there, he was requested to visit the destitute flock in Bridge Street; and in the beginning of the year 1799 consented so to do. This was the Rev. SAMUEL LOWELL, then in the fortieth year of his age.

His probationary services were soon followed by an earnest and unanimous invitation to take the oversight of them in the Lord: and at Midsummer, in that year, he entered on his stated pastoral labours among them. Mr. Lowell's ministry was highly acceptable to the people, and greatly blessed to their spiritual welfare. The aspect of things soon began to change. The congregation increased. The church, which at the time of Mr. Davies' decease did not number more than fifty members, received valuable accessions to its communion; and in many ways the Lord gave testimony to the word of His grace, confirming it by signs following. Delightful seasons returned. A spirit of inquiry was awakened. Weekly meetings for prayer were again established; and after a short period regular church meetings also, at which the candidates for christian fellowship testified in writing, or through the medium of others, what God had done for their souls.

Happily settled with a minister whom they loved, and whose ministrations they both valued and enjoyed, the church in Bridge Street gradually assumed the appearance of "a field which the Lord had blessed," and became, as a community, a blessing to the places round about. In all the noble plans for evangelizing the world, which originated with the close of the last, or the beginning of the present century, they willingly took a part; and their contributions are found amongst the earliest to the Missionary and Bible cause: whilst their active pastor was engaged, in season and out of season, in efforts to promote their spiritual welfare, or to advance the general interests of the Redeemer's cause and kingdom. For this purpose he published, in 1801, in compliance with the request of numerous friends, a volume of "Sermons on Evangelical and Practical Subjects, designed chiefly for the use of Families," and to which a large number of subscribers had attached their names. At the cessation of the war, in 1802, he published a discourse, entitled "The Blessings of Peace," preached to his people on the day appointed for a general thanksgiving, June 1st, from the appropriate language of the Psalmist, in Psalm cxlvii. 12-14: and in the same year, a sermon addressed to the young, occasioned by the death of one of their number, George Griffiths, entitled, "Early Piety recommended from the Example of Josiah." Two members of the church, whom, in the first year of his connection with it, he had received into fellowship, had devoted themselves to the ministry. These were Mr. William Vowles, who studied at Wymondley; and Mr. William Lane, who enjoyed the instructions of the excellent Cornelius Winter, at Painswick, and afterwards became pastor of the church in Wells;

in both of whose early ministrations and settlement Mr. Lowell took a lively concern; and the latter of whom survived him in the work of God.

The year 1813 was rendered somewhat remarkable in the history of the church at Bridge Street by two circumstances, which may just be alluded to, as indicative of the pastor's usefulness, and the willing co-operation of the people.—The one was the acquisition of the present commodious vestry. Hitherto the members had had no place of meeting for conference and prayer but the chapel, which for such purposes was necessarily found inconvenient to all. They had long desired a separate and more social place of resort. This they were this year enabled to obtain, by arrangements which put them into possession of a large adjoining apartment, which had been used as a warehouse, and by fitting it up for the private and more social services of the house of God. The expense, which was considerable, was cheerfully borne by them. Pastor and flock rejoiced together in the new accommodation; and the place was secured on a lease of 110 years, for the purposes of Sabbath-school instruction, and mutual edification and prayer.—The other was the presence of a large regiment of the Renfrewshire militia in the public services of the sanctuary with them. These good Scotch soldiers were stationed for a considerable time in Bristol, and not being able to find any church connected with their native land in the city, they petitioned their colonel that they might be permitted regularly to worship at Bridge Street chapel. The request was granted. The congregation afforded them all the accommodation, as to sitting, in their power. Every Lord's-day the galleries were fully occupied by them; and to these red-coated

hearers the Minister addressed one sermon in particular, which was afterwards printed, entitled, "The Christian Soldier," from the text 2 Timothy ii. 3. Nearly five hundred were present on the occasion.

Another event of local and public importance which engaged Mr. Lowell's attention, and which he sought both from the pulpit and the press to improve, was the decease of that distinguished benefactor and friend, not of Bristol only, but of mankind at large, Richard Reynolds, Esq., whose liberal donations to every humane and charitable cause had excited the admiration of many, and entitled him to the epitaph of "The Philanthropist of the Age." His loss was deeply felt in Bristol, and in the surrounding counties. The pastor of Bridge Street felt it his duty publicly to notice such an event, and directed the attention of his people to it, on Sabbath, September 22nd, 1816, in a discourse from Isaiah lvii. 1., which was afterwards published, under the title of "The loss of righteous and merciful men lamented and improved," with a brief memoir of the departed affixed to it. The sermon was deemed eminently appropriate to the occasion; and the memorial of the deceased was considered faithfully to delineate "a singularly interesting and admirable example of christian philanthropy."

Thus occupied in works of usefulness and labours of love in his great Master's cause, in the pulpit and from the press,* in pastoral duties, and evangelizing efforts in the

* The last production of his pen, and which was not issued from the press till after his decease, was a discourse on the "Reasons for Dissent," delivered at the ordination of the Rev. John Wooldridge, at Newfoundland Street Chapel, October 23rd, 1823, and published at the request of many who heard it.

vicinity, in annual visits to the Tabernacle in London, and in frequent excursions on behalf of the Missionary cause, this devoted man continued in his course till the year 1823, at the close of which his work was done. On the evening of the 30th of October, in that year, returning from a church meeting, he took a severe cold, which assumed a very serious aspect, and soon confined him to his bed. Other complaints ensued. He continued, through the week following, to grow worse. All possible help was afforded ; and everything that human kindness and counsel could do, was done, to counteract disease, and lengthen his mortal career. But the "appointed time" was come. Intimations of danger soon appeared ; and nineteen days only intervened betwixt his active engagements and his dismissal from service to be present with his Lord. During the whole of that period, the precious truths which had formed the theme of his ministry were the source of consolation and joy to his soul, and frequently became the matter of remark and conversation with those around. His latter end was pre-eminently "peace;" and the record of it, from the pen of a friend at the time, is too interesting to be lost. It is thus given, with a few additional particulars, in the Evangelical Magazine for February, 1824 :—

"I many times had the privilege of attending him during his illness ; I say privilege, for such it truly was ; his conversation was most interesting, instructive, and delightful ; and not a murmuring word once escaped his lips. As clay in the hands of the potter, so it was his wish to be in the hands of his Heavenly Father.

"Towards the commencement of his affliction, he was often inquiring of one of his daughters, whether she thought he would live or die. She expressed her hope that he would live. He replied, 'I did not ask what are your hopes, but what is your opinion ; but,' added he, 'I wish you perfectly to understand that

I do not inquire because I feel any fear of death, for I am perfectly willing that it [his illness] should terminate in life or death.'

"He had the most exalted views of the Saviour, and the most humbling and debasing thoughts of himself as a sinner before God; and his only plea was, 'Jesus lived and died for me.'

"While his medical attendant was bleeding him, he exclaimed, 'Oh that blood, that blood, reminds me of that precious, precious blood which was shed for the remission of sins; that is all my consolation; that is all my desire; that is all my hope; if that fails, everything fails: Oh that I may ever keep near the cross of Jesus!'

"At another time he exclaimed, 'Oh what would Socinianism do for me now? Oh no;—none but Christ!—none but Christ!' adding, '*that* is the rock on which a poor sinner must build; and if that fails, all will fail.'

"To another friend who waited on him, he said, 'You see, my dear friend, that we have nothing to apply to, but as in common with other christians—to that rock which will never fail.'

"To some of his family he said, 'Remember, my dear children, that a dying father tells you, that if he should get to heaven, he will be the most unworthy of those who shall find admission there;' and taking hold of one of his daughters, he added emphatically, 'but I *shall* get there, I have no *fear* of getting there.' His humble confidence in the Redeemer was mingled with a holy and unlimited submission to the sovereign will of his heavenly Father. It is true, he neither felt nor expressed any ecstasy, nor exuberance of joy; but a placid and unruffled resignation to the Divine will was the ruling sentiment of his heart.

"In the midst of his shivering fits and violent spasms of the stomach, which were sometimes truly awful, he raised himself and said to one of his daughters, 'In very faithfulness the Lord has done it; and because it pleaseth him I am quite willing—yea, quite willing, that it should be just thus.'

"After a very distressing and restless night, his attention was forcibly arrested by those words of the inspired psalmist, 'Be still, and know that I am God;' which had an evident and powerful effect in tranquilizing and consoling his spirit; immediately after which he composed the few following verses:—

"I come to Thee, my gracious God,
For grace to bow beneath Thy rod;
To acquiesce in all Thy will,
And learn the important word, "Be still."

Thou seest my feeble frame oppressed,
In vain my spirit sighs for rest ;
But, Lord, perform Thy holy will,
And teach my spirit to be still.

Thou knowest how wayward is my mind,
While all Thy ways are just and kind ;
Oh make me love Thy holy will,
And bid Thy servant to be still." **

"His frame of mind was not only eminently resigned, but grateful. Scarcely did he receive even a glass of water, but he expressed his thanks to those who presented it, and added invariably some expression of gratitude also to God.

"Whenever he was raised up to have his pillows adjusted, he generally mentioned some short but encouraging and delightful portions of Scripture; from which his friends were comforted with the assurance that his mind was kept in perfect peace; and that the enemy had not been permitted to gain any advantage over him. On one of these occasions he uttered, with a peculiar pathos, 'Yet will I look again toward Thy holy temple.'

"Our deceased friend was one of the kindest of fathers; and in him parental affection was strong in death. As his disease increased, and the pins of the earthly tabernacle were evidently loosening, he said, 'The time of my departure is at hand: I feel that I must die.' And as his family stood weeping around his bed, he added, 'I am not like Jacob: it is true I wished to see my sons, as I could not go down into Egypt to see them before I die, but they are come to see me.'

"But a few days before his death, laying hold of the hand of one of his daughters, he thus poured out all the tenderness of his heart in fervent prayer:—'May the blessings of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, rest upon my dear children, and my children's children; and the dear little flock with whom I have spent so many happy days.'

"The feelings of the dying pastor thus mingled with those of the dying parent; and this was also seen on another occasion, when he observed to one of his daughters, 'I fancy that I am standing in the pulpit in Bridge Street.' To which she replied, 'Well, papa, I hope you will soon stand there again.' 'No, my dear,' he said, 'that is not what I was then thinking of.' And then he

* These verses were sung with great interest after the funeral discourse at Castle Green.

began to particularize the seats which various friends occupied, and offered up a short prayer for each, according to their respective circumstances. After specifying many, he said, 'but I am too weak to go on;' and then added, 'May the Lord bless them all, though I cannot name them; and may my God be their God!'

"Seeing his daughter weeping by his bedside, he said, 'What dost thou cry for, my dear? What, cry! and I feel a certainty that I am going to Christ! What, cry for me? Don't weep; I am not afraid to die. I am desirous—I long to be gone.'

"The last Sabbath before he died, he asked her what day it was; and being told it was the Sabbath, he clasped his hands, and exclaimed, 'Oh, my darling, my next Sabbath will be happier than this,' repeating several times, very emphatically, 'Happier! happier! happier!'—'I love you all (he added); and many, many friends, but I am quite willing to leave you all for Jesus, persuaded that to depart and be with Him is far better.' At another time he thus expressed himself to one of his daughters: 'Ah, my dear! you are all very kind: I value your love, and am much obliged by all your kind attentions, but I would rather leave you all,' and then expanding his arms, he said, 'You cannot see it, my dear, but I see my Jesus with extended arms, ready to receive me to His bosom.'

"Once, when he was supposed to be insensible, and near his end, he asked for something to revive him; his eldest son standing by, and offering him one thing in preference to another, he put his hand on his shoulder and said, 'My son, my dear son, I know thy love, thy strong but ineffective love!' And then turning to the state of his own mind, in the near prospect of death and eternity, he added, 'I now know and see, and feel the meaning of those lines, "The world recedes, it disappears!" Heav'n!'—and lifting up his hands, could say no more.

"In this happy frame of mind, in which resignation, confidence in God, gratitude for his mercies, love to his family and flock, deep humility, and ardent love of his Redeemer, were all sweetly blended, he departed this life on Tuesday, the 18th of November.

"On the following Tuesday, his remains were deposited in Portland Chapel, Kingsdown. His funeral was attended by an immense concourse of people, who came to express their respect for his memory. In the procession, the Rev. W. Thorp preceded the corpse, being by the will of the deceased requested to deliver the address at the grave. After whom followed a number of ministers, both from the city and country. The following ministers

were the pall-bearers:—Rev. Messrs. Ryland and Jay; Priestly and Wooldridge; Roberts and Crisp. The multitude either followed in the procession, or walked as mournful spectators of the solemn scene. Having arrived at the chapel, which was crowded to excess, so that hundreds could obtain no admission, and the coffin being elevated upon trestles, the Rev. Mr. Fleming read a portion of scripture and prayed; and Mr. Thorp delivered the funeral oration to a deeply affected auditory. Mr. Roberts then gave out a suitable hymn, and Dr. Ryland engaged in prayer. After which, the body was conveyed to its long home—into the cemetery under the chapel, where Mr. Thorp concluded the affecting scene with the following short address:—‘When Jesus was standing at the grave of Lazarus, with infinite compassion in His heart, and omnipotence in His arm—he wept—and weeping, said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” Then,’ pointing to the vault, he added, ‘Farewell! Farewell, dear man of God!—Farewell! till we meet in thy Father’s house above, “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest; where tears are wiped away from the eyes of the mourner—and where ‘mortality is swallowed up of life.’”

“On the following Sabbath morning the Rev. W. Jay preached his funeral sermon at Bridge Street Chapel, to a crowded auditory, from John xi. 16, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him;’ and Mr. Thorp improved the event in the evening at Castle Green meeting, from 1 Samuel iii. 18, ‘And he said, It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.’”

A tablet to his memory in Bridge Street Chapel bears the following inscription:—

“In Memory of
THE REV. SAMUEL LOWELL,
Who finished his course with joy on the 19th of November, 1823,
Aged 64 years.
He succeeded the Rev. JAMES DAVIES
As Pastor of this Church,
And continued in the faithful discharge of the duties of that office
for more than twenty-four years.

—♦♦♦—
This tablet is erected by his bereaved flock,
In affectionate remembrance of
His character and services.”

The grave closed on the mortal remains of their beloved pastor in the last month of 1823, and the first six months of the year following were occupied in anxious solicitude and prayer, by the destitute flock, to obtain a suitable workman for so important a station in the church of God. Several recommendations were entertained; and various supplies were heard during that period; but their attention was at length directed to, and their hearts were unitedly fixed upon, the Rev. JOHN LEIFCHILD, of Kensington, who, for sixteen years, had laboured with diligence and success among the people at Hornton Street, in that suburban vicinity. After spending a few Sabbaths in Bridge Street, in the spring of 1824, and in a second and later visit to Bristol, he received, on the 8th of July, a most urgent and unanimous request to take the superintendence of this part of the fold; and so deep was the impression that his ministrations had produced, that, in addition to the communication from the church, letters were sent from the congregation also, and from each of the two classes of juvenile hearers, entreating him to come and labour among them in the Lord. With much consideration and prayer, and with a willing mind, the pastor of Kensington directed his attention to this request, and thought in it he heard the voice of the Great Master summoning him to a larger sphere of usefulness in the metropolis of the West. He accordingly complied with the invitation thus presented; and, on the 13th of August, sent an affirmative reply to the people. Various circumstances detained him in the neighbourhood of London till towards the end of the year. Other ministers in the intervening time supplied. In November the chapel was closed for improvement and

repairs: and on Sabbath, December 12th, Mr. Leifchild entered on his stated pastoral labours, amidst the welcomes of an attentive, a rejoicing, and a grateful auditory.

Manifold tokens of the Divine blessing followed this arrangement of an All-directing Providence; and the ministrations of so able and efficient a pastor were attended with renewed interest, and correspondent attachment among the people. The sanctuary was usually filled with an attentive audience. The young, of both sexes, were deeply interested in Mr. Leifchild's labours. The careless were awakened—the anxious inquirer was directed—believers were edified and multiplied—and in the course of his ministry much people were gathered to the Lord. The members who were added to the church during his pastorate were more numerous than in any similar period of their previous history; and the influence of the minister and people of Bridge Street was beneficially felt in the city, in the neighbourhood, and throughout the world. The missionary cause was well supported by them. The Bible Society had willing co-operators among them. Their Sabbath School was a blessing. And in evangelizing labours for the city, and for the villages in its vicinity, this church and congregation from that time became, in union with the other churches, both distinguished and useful.

But the fairest prospects of peaceful prosperity in the church of Christ are liable for a season to be beclouded, not only by the invasions of the last enemy, but by those changes to which in the present world all are subject, and by those removals of the labourers which the great Lord of the vineyard sees proper for the due cultivation of every part of his heritage. This was now to be experienced at Bridge

Street ; and within seven years of the commencement of his pastorate was this people to be deprived of the minister whom they admired and loved, by the transfer of his services to another locality. Craven Chapel, London, was a noble edifice, built by the munificence, chiefly, of Thomas Wilson, Esq., and presented a sphere of vast importance and inviting aspect in the great metropolis to a suitable minister, for whom it had long been waiting, to fill its spacious walls, and diffuse gospel light and influence among the teeming population around. To this metropolitan sphere Mr. Leifchild was invited ; and after long and anxious deliberation, thought it his duty to comply. He communicated his resolution to his people in the autumn of 1830 ; and on Sabbath evening, January 9th, 1831, in an appropriate discourse, he bade them an affectionate farewell.*

After appointing a committee to assist the deacons in obtaining appropriate supplies for the pulpit, and waiting for more than twelve months, the church at Bridge Street was directed to the Rev. GEORGE LEGGE, M.A., who had enjoyed an excellent education for the ministry, first at Aberdeen, and afterwards at Highbury College ; and came to Bristol in the early part of 1832, on the recommendation of his friend, the Rev. Dr. Morison, of Brompton. The people heard him with pleasure for several successive Sabbaths ; and afterwards, at a church meeting on the 12th of April, with but two dissentients, gave him an earnest invitation to assume the oversight of them in the Lord. Encouraged by his brethren, whose advice he sought and

* During his residence in Bristol, Mr. Leifchild published "A Help to the private and domestic reading of the Holy Scriptures," a second edition of which was soon required.

esteemed, Mr. Legge promptly accepted the invitation, and came to reside in Bristol at the beginning of June. He entered on his engagements the first Sabbath in that month. On Tuesday, the 31st of July, amidst hopeful prospects of usefulness, he was ordained to the work of the ministry; the Rev. Messrs. Lucy, Davies, Thorp, Morison, Philip, and Winter taking part in the solemnities of the occasion. Much interest was excited by the ordination services of the youthful pastor, and a deep impression was produced by the appropriate answers given by him to the important questions proposed. In an earnest and affectionate spirit he committed himself to the work given him to do; and enjoyed, for a few years, the sympathies and prayers of all around him, not unattended with tokens of the great Master's benediction. But in the year 1835 circumstances occurred which induced him to think of a removal. On the 29th of October, in that year, at a church meeting, an affectionate letter was read from him, in confirmation of a preceding communication, resigning his pastoral charge; and on the following Sabbath, the first in November, he closed his labours among them. A resolution was passed by the church "expressive of much sorrow in accepting the resignation, and affectionately commending him to the guidance and direction of the great Lord of all." Since that period, Mr. Legge has been a useful labourer in the populous town of Leicester.

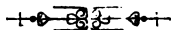
Early in the year following, the church assembled harmoniously and prayerfully to consider the course of duty for them to pursue in their destitute condition, and came to an honourable resolution, to which they individually pledged themselves, that, in case of need, in

reference to the election of a pastor, and in order to continued unity, any minority would acquiesce in the decision of a majority. To this judicious and commendable arrangement they adhered, and the Author of peace and concord followed it with the tokens of His approval. After having heard, with profit and pleasure, the various ministers who had visited them, their choice unanimously fell on the Rev. HENRY ISAAC ROPER, formerly a student at Hoxton, but who for several years had been a devoted and useful labourer in the growing town of Teignmouth, on the coast of Devonshire. There he had been instrumental of renovating a church and congregation. He was much loved and esteemed in that vicinity, as well as in other parts of the country where he was known, and felt much on parting from a flock over which he had watched with assiduity and success. But the call to Bristol he considered a decided indication of the great Master's will concerning him; and accordingly prepared to remove. On the 14th of May, 1835, he communicated to the church his acceptance of their invitation; and in the month following entered on the duties of his pastorate, in the faithful and efficient discharge of which he has continued to the present day.



Pastors.

Weeks	(about) 1670 to 1698.
Kentish	1695 to 1704.
Catcott	1705 to 1719.
Gough	1710 to 1717.
Furze	1718 to 1719.
Jones	1719 to 1720.
Fisher.....	1720 to 1732.
Reyner	1721 to 1744.
Harson	1744 to 1758.
Wright	1756 to 1765.
Harwood	1765 to 1772.
Janes	1772 to 1775.
Davies	1775 to 1797.
Lowell	1799 to 1823.
Leifchild	1824 to 1831.
Legge.....	1832 to 1835.
Roper	1836.



CHAPTER VII.

THE TABERNACLE.

**“And I saw another Angel fly in the midst of heaven,
having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them
that dwell on the earth.”**

WHITFIELD. — HIS SUCCESS. — KINGSWOOD. — THE TABERNACLE IN
BRISTOL. — ITS FOUNDATION. — OPENED BY WHITFIELD IN THE
YEAR 1753. — HIS COADJUTORS. — CORNELIUS WINTER. — ROW-
LAND HILL. — MANAGERS. — VARIOUS MINISTERS. — CAPTAINS
SCOTT AND JOSS. — MATTHEW WILKS. — SUCCESSORS AT THE
TABERNACLE. — DAVIES. — ITS GREAT USEFULNESS. — LONDON
MISSIONARY SOCIETY. — GLENDENNING.

IF ever there was an uninspired individual to whom this apocalyptic language could be applied, it was the immortal WHITFIELD, from whose successful labours in Bristol arose the venerable sanctuary to whose history we cheerfully devote a few pages. For although not immediately connected with Independency, nor strictly Congregational in its order and discipline, either at its commencement or at the present time, it has so long been supplied principally by Independent Ministers, and is so cordially associated with the Congregational churches of the city in every work of faith

and labour of love, that our narrative would be incomplete did it not include some account of the Tabernacle, Bristol.*

Arising out of the success with which the great Lord of the harvest was pleased to crown the labours of His devoted servant in this city and its vicinity (where, to use his own expression, "he began to take the field," having been forbidden to preach in the churches by the powers that were,) a necessity was felt for more regular and spacious places of worship, in which the living word might be proclaimed to the thousands who wished to attend. Kingswood Tabernacle had already been reared, as "a city set on a hill," in which the neglected and lost of the colliers might seek refuge, and hear words whereby they might be saved. At Bristol it was equally important and desirable that a fold for the flock already gathered in should be secured, and a sanctuary be erected, in which the seraphic orator might proclaim to listening multitudes "the unsearchable riches of Christ." This, Whitfield, with his accustomed energy, undertook to provide. Others of like mind, in different walks of life, united with him, and encouraged the enterprise. Lady Huntingdon, as usual, sanctioned and helped him. At her instance the accomplished Lord Chesterfield, as an admirer of Whitfield's eloquence, gave twenty pounds. The Earl of Bath sent fifty, saying, "Mocked and reviled as Mr. W. is by all ranks of society, still I contend that the day will come when England will be just, and own his greatness as a Reformer, and his

* For the statement that follows the writer is indebted chiefly to the interesting narrative of the Rev. John Glanville, of Wotton-under-Edge, in the "Centenary Services of Bristol Tabernacle," published in 1854, and to which for a fuller account he refers, an epitome only being thought necessary here.

goodness as a minister of the Most High God." Not a few besides these assisted in the work. The foundation was laid by Whitfield's own hand. The structure rose. It was completed. And on the 25th of November, 1753, it was opened, and dedicated to the preaching of the "everlasting gospel," and the worship of the Triune God. The great preacher himself officiated on the occasion, and afterwards, all through life, devoted as much time as he could possibly spare from other engagements to his beloved Tabernacle, at Bristol.

Amongst the men who assisted, and afterwards succeeded him, in his labours, were some of the excellent of the earth, and of the most eminent preachers of the glad tidings of redemption with which the church of Christ has at any time been favoured. They belonged to various denominations; and some of them, we might say, to no denomination at all. They occupied even different ranks in life, and were members of various professions. The titled Baronet, the commissioned officer, the pious soldier, the gifted tradesman, as well as the educated clergyman and the regularly trained Dissenter, were engaged at different times in ministering within its walls; whilst HOWEL HARRIS, the Apostle of Wales; THOMAS ADAMS, the founder and pastor of Rodborough Tabernacle; and JOHN CROOME, the Bunyan of his age, were associated with them in the work of the Lord. CENNICK, the poet and divine; ROWLAND and DAVIES, two more men of fire from the Principality; EASTERBROOK, head master of Trevecca College, and subsequently vicar of Temple Church, in this city; and others, were in like manner employed, till, at the death of Whitfield, the Rev. CORNELIUS

WINTER was requested to take the superintendence of the Tabernacle for a season.

How long this excellent man was in charge of the Tabernacle affairs, does not appear; but in 1771 he introduced into the pulpit the Rev. ROWLAND HILL, who, perhaps, more than any other man might be viewed as Mr. Whitfield's successor. The mantle of the departed evangelist seems to have fallen upon him; and he went forth, a champion of the Cross, to fight the Lord's battles. Lady Huntingdon says of him: "The popularity of Mr. Hill, and the crowds that follow him, overwhelm me with astonishment. Captain Joss told me of one hundred persons received into the Tabernacle Society, the fruits of his preaching. Excepting my beloved and lamented Mr. Whitfield, I never witnessed any person's preaching wherein there were such displays of Divine power and glory as in Mr. Hill's." For many years he was a regular visitor to the Tabernacle, always exciting interest by his ministrations; and to the end of his protracted course, in 1833, continued to feel a lively interest in its prosperity.

This has been in no small degree promoted, from the beginning till now, by the excellent and devoted men whom God raised up and qualified, in succession, to superintend and help in the administration of its concerns, both spiritual and temporal. Some of these have been persons in the higher walks of life, resident in Bristol, or its vicinity. The late Sir A. Elton, an ancestor of the distinguished family at Clevedon Court, was at one time its Treasurer; and with him, and since his day, have been some exemplary citizens of Bristol associated with its Tabernacle, who have taken an active part in the conduct

of its affairs. This continues to the present time ; and not a little does its long-standing usefulness owe to the piety and worth of influential individuals and families connected with it.

To enumerate all the various preachers, of more or less celebrity, who have been labourers within the walls of this honoured sanctuary, for now above a century, would be difficult, if not impossible ; and our space forbids the attempt. A few of their names, however, we cannot resist the inducement to record. Honourable mention might be made of the Messrs. SHIPMAN and GROVE, two of the expelled students from Oxford, excommunicated for "singing, praying, and expounding God's holy word" in that renowned abode of literature and science ; who, at Bristol, and elsewhere, were enabled and encouraged to proclaim Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Captain SCOTT, of military fame, preached here also, whilst he held his commission in the army, and attracted multitudes by his regimentals in the pulpit, to many of whom his message proved "the power of God unto salvation." And Captain TORIEL JOSS, of the navy, who from going down to the sea in ships, and making lucrative voyages to distant coasts, became a coadjutor of Mr. Whitfield in London, and was an annual visitor to Bristol, where he cast the gospel net with no small degree of success, and enclosed not a few to gather them into the kingdom of heaven.

One of the oldest, and certainly one of the most devoted friends of the Tabernacle, was the Rev. MATTHEW WILKS, distinguished alike by his eccentricity, his piety, and his usefulness in winning souls to Christ. To him it was a

second home; and his annual visits to it he was accustomed much to enjoy. He loved it like a father, and ever acted towards it the part of a wise and judicious friend. Partly contemporary with, and after him, came his honoured colleagues—JOHN HYATT, CHRISTOPHER MENDE, ASHBURNER, of Poole, ENGLISH, of Woburn, MOODY, of Warwick, BOGUE, of Gosport, GRIFFIN, of Portsea, with ROBY, PARSONS, SIBREE, of Frome, ELLIOTT, of Devizes, and a goodly host besides, all bearing witness to the same glorious truths, and uniting in their spirit and testimony to say, "One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren."

"Until the year 1831 the Tabernacles at Bristol and Kingswood were supplied by ministers from various parts of the kingdom, the ministers alternating between the two places; but at that time the Rev. JOHN DAVIES, of Bath, settled here as the pastor, having one minister associated with him as a supply; and thus the official connection between the two Tabernacles was maintained as before. After labouring for upwards of four years, Mr. Davies was compelled to retire, in consequence of ill-health, and died, in 1850, at Welshpool. He was a good man, kind and gentle in his bearing, and much esteemed; his preaching was eloquent and popular, perhaps a little too much elaborated and ornamented to be generally and permanently effective; still, his pastorate was not without considerable success." (Glanville, p. 114.) The Tabernacle at Kingswood received its first stated minister, the Rev. JOSEPH CORP, in 1829, who continued but for a short period, by reason of death. He was succeeded, after a few years, by the Rev. JOHN GLANVILLE, now of Wotton-under-Edge, in

1835, who laboured usefully till 1855. In his time the New Tabernacle was erected.

In thus glancing at the history of the Tabernacle, and reflecting, as we must, with adoring gratitude, on what God has done there, in the conversion of souls, and the ingathering of multitudes to Himself, it would be wrong to limit its usefulness to what has been accomplished within its walls. It has been in other ways a blessing to many, and made a blessing to the places round about. Other city churches have received benefit from it, and not a few have joined their fellowship from its community. Several flourishing christian societies have sprung out of it; and in most of the Independent churches of the neighbourhood may be found some valuable members who, with their ancestors, once worshipped in its pews. Three prosperous congregations, as these memorials testify, have arisen from the Divine blessing on the labours of individuals connected with it; while to all the benevolent and evangelical institutions of Bristol it has given a liberal and uniform support. The future world only will disclose how much the religious interests of Bristol and its vicinity have been influenced by, and indebted to, the Tabernacle which Whitfield founded, and which happily continues in an effective condition to the present time. The first Sabbath-school in the city was opened here in 1800, which has always been efficiently conducted, and made useful to many. A domestic mission, for carrying the gospel to the houses and homes of its immediate locality, has been crowned with an abundant blessing; and from these agencies, and its communion, have gone forth a goodly number to be preachers of the word of life, some of whom have risen to eminence in the vineyard

at home, or in the missionary field abroad. In the Tabernacle House, in which Whitfield himself used to reside, it is affirmed (and what could have been more fitting) that the London Missionary Society was first conceived and cherished, if not born, Dr. Bogue, of Gosport, being a supply there in 1793, when the great enterprise first laid hold of his mind, and produced the impression, which, after intercourse with the ministers of the city, led to his celebrated address in the "Evangelical Magazine" of the year following. From that time to this the Missionary cause has found a genial soil, and a welcome home, in the sanctuary which the greatest of modern missionaries reared, and in which his spirit still lives. Long may it stand, to echo and diffuse "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," and to aid the triumphs of Immanuel in every land.

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles,
O Israel."

Since the above was written, an important change has taken place in the circumstances and prospects of the Tabernacle. For a long time previously, as is well known, the people assembling there had been desirous of the advantages of a stated ministry. Of these they had had some experience before, but in the providence of God the labours of Mr. Davies were cut short among them. Of late, however, it has been increasingly felt that what was suitable, and proved efficient in years past, was not so adapted or so useful in present times. The constant change of ministry, and the growing difficulty of obtaining appropriate supplies, led to the resolution of seeking a

settled pastorate, and of embracing the first opportunity which the great Head of the church should present before them of inviting some one of His servants to take the oversight of them in the Lord. This, after long patience, waiting, and prayer, has now arrived, and "their eyes behold their teacher" in the person of the Rev. JOHN GLENDENNING, late of Uxbridge, who has recently entered on his pastoral work among them. Mr. G. was introduced to their notice as a supply in the month of November, 1858, and such was the impression produced, and the interest awakened by his services for three Sabbaths among them, that the people unanimously resolved to invite him to become their resident pastor. After returning to Uxbridge, he was waited upon by a leading member of the Tabernacle, with a request to this effect, signed by 480 individuals of the church and congregation. The call was both earnest and unanimous. The people thought they saw in it the hand of God, and a peculiar manifestation of answer to prayer. After a short period, Mr. Glendenning communicated an affirmative reply to their invitation, and on the last Sabbath in February, 1859, entered on his stated labours among them.

On Wednesday, 30th of March, 1859, Mr. Glendenning was publicly recognised as the pastor of the society, and stated minister of the Tabernacle, in the midst of a large assembly of witnesses. The pastors, deacons, and many of the members of the neighbouring churches, were present on the occasion. In the morning, the service was opened by the Rev. A. McMillan, of Taunton, who read the Scriptures, and prayed. The Rev. G. Wood, of Zion Chapel, requested from one of the elders a statement of

the circumstances which led to the election of Mr. Glendenning as their pastor, which was replied to in an interesting statement read by Mr. James Foster; and Mr. Glendenning, on his part, returned a suitable and satisfactory answer to the inquiries usually presented to the minister on such occasions. After united prayer for a blessing, the Rev. H. I. Roper, of Bridge Street, gave an address on the elements of church prosperity; and the Rev. D. Thomas, of Highbury, followed with another on the success whence such prosperity should be sought and obtained. The Rev. J. Tayler, of Anvil Street, concluded with supplication. In the evening the service was resumed. The Rev. T. Winter, of Counterslip, read the word, and prayed; and the Rev. James Parsons, of York, preached an appropriate sermon, from II. Peter, i. 12, with much affection and power, admonishing the people on their privileges, obligations, and encouragements to seek the prosperity of the work of the Lord. After offering himself the concluding prayer and benediction, the Hallelujah Chorus closed the day.

Thus terminated the services of a season not soon to be forgotten, and upon which we trust many will have to look back with adoring gratitude and praise,

“Whilst saints and angels join to sing,
The growing empire of their King.”



CHAPTER VIII.

LODGE STREET CHAPEL.

**"It is the power of God to salvation to every one
that believeth."**

WHITFIELD AND WESLEY.—THEIR SUCCESS.—LADY HUNTINGDON.
—ASSEMBLY ROOMS OPENED FOR PREACHING.—LABOURERS.—
REV. W. COOPER.—EFFORTS FOR A NEW CHAPEL.—REV. W.
LUCY.—PRESENT CHAPEL OPENED.—MR. LUCY'S MINISTRY.—
REMOVAL.—SUPPLIES.—DIVISION.—PEARSALL.—EASTMEAD.

THERE are few periods in the history of the church of Christ in our land, on which the mind of an ardent christian can look back with more satisfaction and delight, than that in which the revival of religion took place in the latter half of the last century, and valiant servants of the Most High God were running to and fro to shew unto men the way of salvation. Darkness and formality had spread over the British Isles. God said, "Let Whitfield be," and light and life arose. That seraphic man, with Wesley, his illustrious compeer, fled, like the angel of the Apocalypse, with the "everlasting gospel," to preach to all who would

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hear it, without respect of persons or places ; and multitudes heard the words from their lips to whom it proved "the power of God unto salvation." The church, the chapel, the tabernacle, the mount, the field, the vale, all echoed to the notes of the "joyful sound" from their lips, and gave testimony to the presence and power of Israel's God. There was scarce a city, or a district, in England and Wales, which heard not the mighty appeal from their voice, and awoke not at the presence and coming of their Lord.

Bristol was a spot highly favoured of God at that interesting juncture, and honoured to be a chief place of the triumphs of the gospel, from the lips of its heroic preachers. There Whitfield began, as he terms it, "to take the field," and first preached in the open air, with the sky for his sounding board, the green earth for his platform, the trees for his witnesses, and the hill-side for the pulpit on which he stood. When the Churches would not receive him, or could not contain the numbers which thronged to hear him, he resorted to a more spacious temple, and "at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in of the doors," or at the more rural place of concourse, proclaimed, with unfettered freedom, the wonderful works of God. Everywhere there was a movement among the dry bones. The Spirit of God descended upon the valley, and signs of life, feeling, consciousness, and action, on all sides appeared.

Amongst the distinguished advocates of evangelical and earnest piety whom the great Lord of all at that time raised up, either called to Himself by Whitfield's labours, or greatly edified and assisted in their spiritual concerns and purposes by him, was the eminent SELINA, Countess of

Huntingdon, one of the most honoured and excellent women that ever lived to grace an exalted circle, or to benefit and bless the church of God. She was Whitfield's senior in years, and had been brought to the knowledge of the truth before the young student of Oxford had begun to inquire the way. But in the thirty-fourth year of his age she was delighted to constitute him one of her chaplains; and ever afterwards, as two kindred spirits, they laboured together for the promotion of the kingdom of Christ, and the best interests of mankind. The one sounded the trumpet of the gospel through all the land; the other sought by her property and influence to establish and perpetuate the spiritual advantages which ensued. This led to the origin and foundation of the religious community whose history we now briefly record.

"The Tabernacle at Bristol," remarks the author of "The Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon," (which was the first-fruits of Whitfield's labours, and had existed now about twenty years,) "continuing to be remarkably well attended, Lady Huntingdon was induced to think of opening another chapel, at the other end of the city. On looking around she was directed to a building which had been an assembly room, and was at that time engaged for an occasional theatre. The proprietor let it to her ladyship on lease at £40 per annum, subject to all repairs, and she employed, it is supposed, nearly £800 in rendering it suitable for Divine worship. It was opened in the month of August, 1775, by Dr. Peckwell and Mr. Glascott. Other ministers were present, and took part in the services of the day, which proved a day of joy and gladness to many hearts. The pulpit was supplied by clergymen of the

Church of England for about ten years; and there Messrs. SHIRLEY, VENN, HAWES, PIERCY, WILLS, PENTYCROSS, ROWLAND, DAVIES, JONES, SHEPPARD, and others, sounded the gospel trumpet to overflowing congregations. Some of the most distinguished families in the kingdom, during their visits to Clifton and the neighbourhood, went to worship there. The Spirit of God was eminently poured forth upon preachers, and upon hearers: the conversion of souls was frequent, and in some instances singularly striking: meetings for prayer were remarkable, especially in the afternoon of the Lord's-day, when hundreds came together with one heart to besiege the throne of grace, and draw the blessings of heaven down. Pious persons from various congregations in the city, and the country around, felt it a privilege to attend, and often realized refreshing seasons from the presence of the Lord."

Such is the account, furnished by the above authority, of the opening and subsequent services of what was usually called "Lady Huntingdon's Chapel" in the city of Bristol. It stood in St. Augustine's place, not far from the Draw-bridge, and was of convenient access from all parts. The building, somewhat altered, is now in the possession of a congregation known by the name of "the Brethren," under the ministry of the Messrs. Craik and Müller.

"Several attempts were made during the Countess's life," continues the same writer, "to obtain a new chapel, but from various causes they failed. In more than one instance, money to a considerable amount was raised, but was afterwards returned to the contributors, or, with their own consent, devoted to some other purpose. After her Ladyship's death, the cause suffered material diminution; but the managers were not left without tokens of the Divine favour, and good was effected by the preaching of the word. On the Rev. William Cooper's visiting

Bristol, fresh vigour was infused; the attendance on the means of grace was very great; the chapel was found far too small for the persons wishing accommodation, and he frequently preached from a window to a much larger number outside than within. The Lord gave testimony to the word of life, and many were brought through his instrumentality to a saving knowledge of the truth. He proffered his services to the committee of management in relation to a larger and more suitable building, but it was not accepted, and nothing was done. The pulpit was regularly supplied by ministers in the Connexion with acceptance, and with various degrees of success; the labours of some now living, and of others who have fallen asleep in Jesus, are still remembered with satisfaction and gratitude.*

"In 1821, a fresh effort was made to erect a new chapel, when £800 was collected and expended in the purchase of a piece of land and buildings, the site of which was afterwards deemed ineligible. It was therefore disposed of, the proceeds vested in government securities, and a deed executed, placing it in the hands of the trustees of the Connexion, to be employed by them in the erection of a chapel in Bristol, when opportunity should offer.

"In 1823, the Rev. William Lucy became the resident minister, and the lease of the chapel expiring in the autumn of the following year, the propriety of immediately commencing a new one was strenuously urged by many, but it was thought prudent to take another short lease of seven years, towards the close of which several members of the congregation, after almost incredible difficulty, became possessed of the spot in Lodge Street on which the new chapel now stands, and proceeded to its erection. The dimensions of the building are sixty-two feet ten inches, by

* The labours of this devoted young minister (Rev. W. Cooper), who was afterwards for twenty-five years, pastor of the church assembling in Plunket Street, Dublin, were everywhere signally blessed, both in Ireland, and in his occasional visits to England. "His services in Bristol," says an interesting memoir of him in the Evangelical Magazine for January, 1852, "continued from June to August, embracing often four services on the sabbath, and one, sometimes two, on each day of the week. At seven o'clock on the Sabbath morning, he preached on the Drawbridge over the river Frome, to two or three thousand people, among whom were many soldiers and sailors. Not unfrequently were tears seen to flow down the cheeks of a weather-beaten tar. At Brandon Hill, thousands met to hear the words of eternal life, many of whom were brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."

fifty-two feet, nine inches, within the walls, exclusive of a recess sufficiently large to admit the pulpit and desks. It is of the Gothic order, and is built with stone, faced on two sides with freestone. It was opened for divine worship on the 17th of August, 1831, one month only before resigning the old Chapel, on which occasion the Rev. John Brown, of Cheltenham, preached in the morning, and the Rev. James Sherman, late of Surrey Chapel, in the evening; the one from Psalm v. 7, and the other from Zechariah iv. 6. The expenses incurred, 'including excellent school-rooms underneath one half the chapel, and a crypt underneath the other half, together with a commodious vestry, were £4,500. The chapel is computed to accommodate between eleven and twelve hundred persons. The additions to the congregation have been very encouraging since the opening of this place of worship: the number of communicants has considerably increased, and there is reason to hope that good has been effected through the preaching of the word." *

To the above correct and explicit statement, from so competent an authority, nothing needs to be added respecting the period to which it refers. But we deeply regret to state that in consequence of the loss of the principal Church Book belonging to this place we are unable to furnish a more minute or lengthened history of its subsequent circumstances. A few particulars only can be supplied.

The Rev. WILLIAM LUCY, a student from Cheshunt College, was publicly ordained to the work of the ministry in the old Chapel on the 16th July, 1823; on which occasion the Revs. S. Lowell, of Bristol; Sharp, of Woolwich; Browning, of Wrington; Kemp, theological tutor, of Cheshunt; and other ministers, were engaged. By his devoted and evangelical labours, the interest now assumed a more regular and settled

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon.

character. The Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace, and not a few were gathered to the fellowship of his people. This gradually led to the more regular formation and conduct of the church as an Independent society; and though its relation continued to the connexion of the Countess of Huntingdon, its discipline became that which is usual among Congregational Dissenters. In this the pastor and people acquiesced. In the year 1835, four years after the opening of the new chapel, a question arose as to the propriety of continuing the use of the Liturgy of the Church of England in the public services of the sanctuary: and it having been ascertained from the trustees in London that "there was nothing in the trust deed under which the chapels in the connexion are held which renders it imperative in them to require its continuance," it was agreed, after much consideration and discussion, by a large majority of the worshippers, to dispense with the forms of common prayer. In this, all, at length, concurred, and the more free mode of worship has been employed, and enjoyed, ever since. Within a short time after this, the remaining debt of about six hundred pounds was liquidated; and the number received into fellowship the year following was greater than in any preceding year. Under Mr. Lucy's ministry the church and congregation continued to be consolidated and enlarged; and in the course of it, extending as it did over the space of twenty-four years, nearly five hundred members were added to the community, and, it is hoped, to the church of the saved, principally the fruit, through the Divine blessing, of his exertions. At the close of that period, various circumstances

induced the pastor of Lodge Street to think of a removal; and in the year 1846 he accepted an invitation to the co-pastorate, and finally to the sole pastorate of the Tabernacle, Greenwich. On his departure from Bristol, a large assembly of his brethren, and the people, met to express their approbation of his past services, to present to him testimonials of their regard, and to wish him success in the name of the Lord. The church, during his connection with it, had enjoyed, for the greater part of it, a season of progress and prosperity, and had attained to a position of eminence and usefulness amongst the tribes of the spiritual Israel in Bristol.

On becoming destitute of a Pastor, and dependent upon supplies, they were visited, amongst others, by the Rev. J. P. HAM, a student of Cheshunt, who, for a short time, had been stationed at Maidenhead, in Berkshire, whose talents and preaching awakened at first some attention, and excited a desire in a majority of the people for his fixed and continued services among them. He was accordingly invited to assume the pastorate, which he accepted, and entered on his labours in the month of January, 1847. For a while, the interest of his ministry continued, and his popularity appeared to increase; but it was now discovered that he had imbibed sentiments at variance with the truths "most assuredly believed among us," and subversive of the gospel of Christ. Fear, solicitude, and regret, began to prevail among the people. Dissatisfaction and division ensued. Many were alienated: others cleaved unto him. The more spiritual portion of the hearers could not endure that "another gospel" should sound from the pulpit from which nothing

but "the truth as it is in Jesus" had hitherto been proclaimed, and a mournful schism in this part of the body of Christ now followed. The result was that a secession accompanied Mr. Ham to another part of the city, where, for a time, he continued to make known the dangerous tenets he had embraced, until, finally, he left the neighbourhood, and became minister of a Socinian congregation in Manchester—a warning to young ministers to beware how they forsake "the good old paths," and remove "the ancient landmarks;" and to people to take heed to the counsel of the beloved apostle,—“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.”

Depressed and weakened by the sad divisions which had occurred, during which, however, it enjoyed the kind sympathy and help of ministerial brethren in the city, the christian society at Lodge Street betook itself to humiliation and prayer before the Lord, and in due time He graciously appeared on their behalf. After hearing various ministers as supplies, their attention was unanimously fixed on the Rev. JOHN SPENCER PEARSALL, of Andover, who, previously a student at Highbury College, had been settled in that town for several years. On supplying the pulpit for a few Sabbaths, the minds of the people were much interested in his ministry, and in November, 1850, he complied with an unanimous invitation to take the oversight of them in the Lord. He entered on his work on the 10th of that month, and by his evangelical preaching, his christian spirit, and ministerial prudence, was happily instrumental in reviving the work of God, and gathering in additional converts, as living stones,

to repair the ruined walls of Zion. The church was again built up. Zeal and love returned : and peace and progress were enjoyed ; till, at the commencement of the year 1855, Mr. Pearsall received an urgent call to the pastorate of the society assembling in Eccleston Chapel, Pimlico, London, which he felt it his duty to accept. The people solicited his continuance with them, but in vain. In the month of March of that year he bade them an affectionate farewell, and removed to prosecute his ministerial labours in the vicinity of the great Metropolis, with the prayers and good wishes of his recent charge.

For some time the destitute flock now remained as sheep without a shepherd, and were visited by various supplies till the month of June, 1856. During that time the Rev. JAMES JOHN EASTMEAD, from Cheshunt College, had preached for five Sabbaths among them, and excited considerable attention among the people. On the 6th of May, he received an almost unanimous invitation to settle with them, and, after earnest deliberation and prayer, and consultation with his senior brethren, he returned on the 21st, an affirmative reply. On the 6th of July, he entered on his pastoral labours, and continued for about a year to dispense the word of life among them. In July, 1857, from various untoward circumstances arising, he resigned his charge.

The church of Christ at Lodge Street has been honourably distinguished, in proportion to its ability, for its attachment to the Missionary cause, and its support of various other benevolent institutions. It has had for many years a flourishing and useful Sabbath-school, superintended by devoted Teachers : and from its fellowship, have entered

the christian ministry some useful and eminent labourers in the vineyard of the Lord. During Mr. Lucy's ministry, especially, it was much favoured in this, and there was generally one student at Cheshunt College from among them. Of those who were thus called to minister in word and doctrine, might be mentioned Messrs. Hurndall, of Bishops Stortford; Sortain, of Brighton; Bowrey, formerly a Missionary in the West Indies, now at Shadwell; Morgan, at Hazlemere; Thoresby, of Spa-fields, London; Eastmead, of Wakefield; Kingdon, City Missionary in Bristol, and others, who have discharged their high vocation with success, and not laboured in vain in the cause of God.



Ministers.

Various supplies from the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, for a shorter or longer period..... from 1775 to 1823.	
Lucy	1823 to 1846.
Ham	1847 to 1849.
Pearsall	1850 to 1855.
Eastmead	1856 to 1857.



CHAPTER IX.

HOPE CHAPEL, CLIFTON.

**“Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel,
with Clement also, and other my fellow labourers,
whose names are in the book of life.”**

LADIES HUNTINGDON, ERSKINE, HESTER, GLENORCHY, AND HOPE.
—LAST TWO VISIT CLIFTON.—SOLICITUDE FOR THE GOSPEL.—
CHAPEL BUILT.—SUPPLIES.—MR. JAY.—VARIOUS MINISTERS.
—GAY.—GREGORY.—CHAPEL REBUILT.—LUKE.

“Of honourable women not a few.” So was it in apostolic times : and, blessed be God, it has been so since. Not unfrequently in England’s history, and amongst the families of her nobility, have there been individuals of the female sex, “women of renown,” in the congregation of the Lord. Preserved in Christ Jesus, and called by the grace of the gospel to a participation of privileges and distinctions more substantial than any the world can give, they have felt it their highest honour to consecrate their rank, influence, and possessions, to Him who gave them, and to employ them in the service of Him who bought them with his blood. The attractions of pleasure, wealth, and fame, had

no glory in their esteem by reason of the glory that excelleth: and their language was that of one of the earliest of christian heroes in the kingdom of the Son of God, "yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

"The Ladies of the Reformation," and "The Ladies of the Covenant," in the review of the past, will occur to all, as happily exemplifying the truth of these remarks: and to these, without contradiction, might be added, the Ladies of Britain's Revival of Religion towards the latter part of the last century. It pleased the great Lord of all to call not a few of them, at that period, to the knowledge of himself, and to honourable positions of labour and usefulness in his cause. And of these we have only to mention the names of the Ladies Huntingdon, Erskine, Hester, Glenorchy, and Hope, to illustrate what we mean.

The last two of the above-named, about the year 1780, were directed to the South of England in pursuit of health, and hoped to obtain renovation and strength, by exchanging the wintry cold of the north, for the more salubrious breezes and temperate atmosphere of the west. Accordingly, having sojourned for a season at Bath on their way, and tried with some effect its healing waters, they were recommended to the Hotwells of Bristol, and to the romantic and enchanting scenery of its vicinity. Sheltered from the north by precipitous cliffs, and open to all the sun that shines on a winter's day, they found Clifton, what many others have, a spot of peculiar salubrity and beauty, and, guided by a beneficent hand, they fixed their tent, and spread the curtains of their habitation, on its lovely hill-side.

The first thing, next to their own immediate interests and concerns, which attracted their attention in the place of their sojourn was, its destitution of christian privileges, and the scarce supply, at that day, of the word of the Lord, and the faithful preaching of His gospel in this interesting neighbourhood. Lady Huntingdon had recently opened her Chapel in that part of Bristol which approached nearest to Clifton, and to this some of the residents of the latter were accustomed to repair, to hear words whereby they might be saved. But, it is not known that at that time Clifton possessed any Sanctuary in which the truth of the gospel was proclaimed; and for this mournful deficiency these two christian ladies were deeply anxious to provide a supply. They walked, they rode, they conversed, they inquired, respecting it; and at length were directed to an eligible site on which a house for the Lord of Hosts might be erected, and the trumpet of the gospel sounded within its walls.

Immediately, and without delay (for they were both at this time in a state of declining health and incipient disease, and appear to have felt the impulse of the admonition, "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"), the spot of ground was secured, an appropriate plan was selected, and the builders were engaged. This was in the year 1786. "Lady Henrietta Hope had united with Lady Glenorchy," says the author of the life of the latter, "in the design of building a chapel near Bristol Hotwells, at their mutual expense, and for this purpose," in connection, probably, with others also, "had given two thousand five hundred pounds." Soon after, the generous donor breathed her last, and was called from services which

she had loved upon earth, to join the higher services of God and the Lamb in His temple above. Her excellent friend and companion severely felt the stroke ; and was now left to accomplish the purpose alone. This, with her accustomed energy and devotion, she proceeded to do. "I have procured," she says, in a letter dated Feb. 28th, 1786, "a plan for a neat place of worship, plain, but elegant, and which will be a suitable monument for my dear friend Lady Henrietta, and which I mean to call Hope Chapel. It is to be finished this summer, and will be opened next spring." Thus was the foundation laid, and the work begun, amidst the triumphs of the last enemy : and the best memorial of the departed was the rising structure in which should be proclaimed the greater triumphs of Him who conquered death, and him that had its power. *

* Her mortal remains were interred within the enclosure of the chapel, and after its erection a tablet was placed on its walls, with this inscription :—

" In a vault under this chapel are deposited
The Remains of LADY HENRIETTA HOPE,
Second daughter of JAMES, Earl of HOPETOUN, in Scotland ;
Who died the First day of January, 1786,
Aged 40 years.

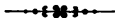
A Lady possessed of the most amiable disposition,
United to manners highly polished,
And strong mental powers greatly improved :
And when to this lovely portrait we add
The high, yet just, colouring of a soul
Enriched with every grace,
And a life adorned with every virtue,
The picture is only drawn to the life.
Yet, though thus high in the scale of reputation,
The deepest humility marked her character ;
Taught from above, she formed a just estimate
Of Time,—and of Eternity.
Therefore, with a noble generosity, she devoted
Herself, and her all, to the glory of God,
And the good of her fellow mortals.—The sacrifice

The execution of the generous design was not long in the hands of her successor, when, in the midst of her useful projects, her strength was also weakened in the way, and disease rapidly came on. After some months of weakness and suffering, sustained by much faith and patience, and cheered with the frequent manifestations of the presence of her Lord, Lady Glenorchy also fell asleep in Jesus, on the 17th of July, 1786, in the house of her relative, Lady Sutherland, George's Square, Edinburgh. Deeply interesting and affecting was her end. It accorded with her life. And from scenes of active usefulness, and consecration to her Redeemer, she took her departure, in the forty-fourth year of her age, to the services and joys of the heavenly world.

All provision, however, was made for the completion of the Chapel at Clifton. "Lady Glenorchy," says Mr. Jones, in her life, "had left a sealed letter, addressed to Lady Maxwell (her executrix), to be delivered after her death, requiring her to finish Hope Chapel, at Bristol Hotwells, and to aid those of Carlisle, Workington, and her other chapels and institutions; which she did; and not long before her death had completely exhausted all the funds Lady Glenorchy had left."

Thus was the "first house" finished at Clifton, and called after the name of its earliest projector and benefactor

Was accepted: and the spirit, ripe for heaven,
 Soon dropped the mantle of mortality, and entered
 Upon the possession of that Inheritance
 That fadeth not away,
 Leaving an example highly worthy of imitation.



This tribute is paid to her Memory
 By her friend, Lady MAXWELL."

“Hope Chapel.” On what particular day it was opened, and dedicated to the worship of the Most High, or who were engaged in the sacred services of the occasion, we have not been able to ascertain. It was, however, in the summer or autumn of 1786.

Soon after its completion, and having been for some time supplied by various preachers, it came into the hands of the “Village Itinerancy” in London, by their payment of a remaining debt, and was duly received by them from Lady Maxwell. Henceforth it became the object of their solicitude and care, and was for some years provided for by Ministers connected with, or recommended by them. The prayers of the Church of England were at this time regularly used in the chapel. Many of the excellent servants of Christ of that day, both in and out of the Establishment, but principally of the latter, occasionally, for a shorter or longer period, visited it, and officiated within its walls, and many noble testimonies to “the truth of Christ” were heard by an attentive and willing people, who could not listen to the notes of salvation, at that time, elsewhere.

Among those who, in the order of Providence, visited, and remained for a while, at this interesting sphere of the Lord’s vineyard, was the late renowned WILLIAM JAY, of Bath, then in the incipient stage of his popularity, and who has left in his own graphic words, in his “Autobiography,” an account of his engagements. He says, “After more than a year in the situation I have described (at Christian Malford), and where my improvement was not small (though it might have been greater with more prudence and diligence), I met with Lady Maxwell, in Bristol, to whom

now belonged Hope Chapel, in the Hotwells. I hardly know how it was (for I did not feel entirely convinced of the propriety of the measure), but she prevailed upon me to supply this chapel, which had not been very long opened. My preaching always filled the place, and I hope good was done. I not only heard of various instances of conversion, but three of those who were awakened by my labours while there became preachers themselves, were ordained over congregations, and died in the faith of Christ. Here I continued about twelve months, and here, it is probable, I should still have continued (as I was pressed both by her ladyship and the people to become their stated minister), but circumstances prevented." And thus closed the connection of the youthful evangelist with Hope Chapel.

Mr. Jay was followed, after a short time, by Mr. JONES, a clergyman of the Church of England, who remained with the congregation for about the same period. This, it is probable, was the Mr., afterwards Dr. Jones, who was the minister of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in Edinburgh, and who wrote her life.

He was succeeded by Mr., afterwards Dr. TRACEY, who was for a short time secretary of the London Missionary Society.

Mr. BROWNING next became the stated pastor. After a short time he removed to Macclesfield : and closed his ministry at Wrington, in Somersetshire, where he laboured for a few years. He is said to have been of a very gentle and affectionate disposition, and was known among his brethren by the appellation of "the weeping Prophet."

A Mr. EVANS next filled the pulpit, but not for a long period. He left Clifton for Aylesbury, in Buckinghamshire : and finished his course at Pill, near Bristol.

In the month of March, 1811, Mr. SAMUEL RABAN, a student from Hackney Academy, after supplying for several Sabbaths, received an earnest invitation to settle with the congregation. With this invitation he complied ; and entered on his ministry at that time, and continued for about nine years, testifying the gospel of the grace of God. His labours were not in vain, and in the review of them he thus writes (March, 1857) :—"During that time, as you may suppose, I had my trials and encouragements. Since I left I have met with many striking instances of God's blessing on my ministry there, of which I was perfectly unconscious ; but as this part of the subject is of a personal nature, you will not expect me to expatiate upon it. The very recollection of the spot awakens peculiar sensations in my mind. Here I began my stated labours, which in different parts of the Lord's vineyard have been continued for upwards of forty-five years ; and my regular services are now terminated only by infirmities and age, having reached my seventy-third year."

After a few months' interval, the Rev. W. H. GUY, from the Academy at Hackney, was cordially invited to become the minister of this destitute people, and to discharge the stated duties of the work among them. Up to this time the prayers of the Church of England had been regularly used in the services of this House of God. But about this period it was mutually agreed, after due consultation and advice with eminent brethren, to dispense with them, and to adopt the free forms of Congregational Dissenters. This

was accordingly done. A Congregational Church was formed on the 6th of September, 1820, consisting of eight members, who soon afterwards ratified, with one accord, the choice of Mr. Guy as their pastor : and on the 20th of December, in the same year, he was publicly ordained among them. On this interesting occasion the Rev. Messrs. Holloway and Ryland, of Bristol ; Luke, of Swansea ; Collison, of London ; and Tidman, of Frome ; with some others, were engaged. Under the pious and evangelical ministry of this devoted pastor, the little one soon increased, and many were added to the Lord, and to his people, of such as should be saved. He was a very excellent and amiable man, diligent, and exemplary, and continued for about nine years the faithful and useful, though frequently afflicted minister, of this infant charge. His work was finished in the spring of 1830, and on the first of April in that year his Divine Master summoned him to his rest at the early age of thirty-one.*

* An appropriate mural Tablet to his memory was placed in the Chapel, thus inscribed :—

“ Sacred to the Memory of

THE REV. W. H. GUY,

For ten years minister of this place,

Who, after a protracted illness, fell asleep in Jesus, April 1st, 1830,

In the 31st year of his age.

His life and ministry were marked by all simplicity and devotion :

His death, by the faith and tranquility of a saint.

He was held in the greatest esteem by christians of every denomination,

And still lives embalmed in the affections of

A surviving Widow,

Of numerous friends, and of the people of his charge,
who fondly cherish the remembrance of his holy example,

useful life, and happy transition to the light and presence
of the Lord God, and of the Lamb.

His mortal remains lie interred in a vault

Beneath the chapel.

—O—

“ Sol occubuit ! sed nox nulla secuta est.”

For more than a year and a half the church at the Hotwells now remained destitute of a pastor, and during that period was kindly visited by neighbouring ministers, and supplies from various parts of the kingdom. No one, however, seemed to fix and unite the affections of the people as their future guide till the Rev. WILLIAM GREGORY came amongst them, at the close of the year 1831. He had just finished his preparatory studies at Hackney ; and after a few Sabbaths' labours received an unanimous invitation to become the pastor. With this request, after due consideration and prayer, he complied ; and entered on his stated work in the month of February, 1832. On the 25th of April he was publicly set apart to the ministerial office : the Rev. Messrs. Brown, of Ashton ; Jackson, of Stockwell ; Davies, of Bristol ; Minshall, of Prees ; and Sibree, of Coventry ; taking part in the solemnities of the day. It was a season long to be remembered ; and pastor and people rejoiced together in the tokens of the Divine favour. The young minister was devoted to his work, and greatly blessed in it. The Lord gave testimony to the word of His grace, and confirmed it by signs following. Pleasing indications of prosperity soon ensued. British Schools were erected, and sustained, principally by the congregation : and in the year 1838, the dilapidated state of the former building, and the want of additional room, led to the erection of a new and enlarged sanctuary. Through the labours of the pastor, and the generous contribution of friends, it was built at a cost of about £2,000, and opened on the 20th of June in that year. The Rev. James Parsons, of York, preached on the occasion, both morning and evening, and the devotional services were conducted by

several of the Bristol ministers. Great interest was manifested : much joy was felt : and many indulged the hope that from that day the name of the city would be "Jehovah-Shammah," "The Lord is there." *

Mr. Gregory continued to labour, with zeal and acceptance, for about the space of ten years, when, unhappily, on a visit to London to attend the Missionary Meetings, he sustained a severe shock from an accident on the railway. From the effects of that concussion he never entirely recovered. It was a mournful providence at the time, and deeply excited the sympathy of his friends. Spinal disorder, and other sufferings, were either occasioned, or promoted by it, and after lingering, for the most part in a reclining posture, and enduring much, with but few intervals of ease, for nearly four years, he finally sank under disease, and breathed his last, in the exercise of christian faith and hope, in February, 1853. During his severe sufferings he enjoyed much of the consolations of the gospel, and felt the value of those truths he had preached to others. On the 23rd of that month his mortal remains were conveyed to their last home, and deposited in a vault by the side of his predecessors, when "devout men" performed the funeral service in the chapel which had been reared by his exertions, and within which his voice had proclaimed the messages of the great salvation. He was much esteemed by many in life, and in death was greatly lamented. His labours, his

* To the honour of three individuals of the church and congregation, it deserves also to be recorded, that an excellent organ, of about three hundred pounds value, was purchased, and presented by them, as a New-year's gift, in January, 1840, to assist the worship in the public praises of God.

sufferings, and his death, together enforced the apostolic appeal "Behold ! *now* is the accepted time, behold ! *now* is the day of salvation."*

The congregation, which had somewhat declined through the long-continued illness of the recent pastor, and the variety and uncertainty of supplies, was, happily, preserved from disunion, and soon directed to another suitable minister to feed them with knowledge and understanding in the fear of the Lord. This was the Rev. SAMUEL LUKE, who had previously laboured both at Chester, and at Orange Street Chapel, in London. On leaving the latter he was conducted by an invisible hand to Clifton, and in May, 1853, commenced his stated labours, in compliance with an earnest invitation which had been given. Around his evangelical and useful ministry the people have again gathered, and though now (with gratitude we state it) four additional churches of the Establishment have been

* A Tablet on the walls of the chapel thus records his Memorial :—

" In Memory of

THE REV. WILLIAM GREGORY,

For twenty-one years pastor of the church and congregation
in this place.

After a painful illness of nearly five years, borne with christian patience and
resignation, he calmly slept in Jesus

On the 15th day of February 1853;

Aged 47 years;

And was interred in the vault beneath.

By his exertions and self sacrifice this chapel was rebuilt and enlarged, and the
adjacent school-rooms were erected.

Devoted and faithful as a pastor, affectionate and watchful as a friend,
uncompromising in principle,

Evangelical in doctrine, and consistent in life.

This Monument is erected by those who appreciated his character, and valued
his ministry, and now affectionately cherish his memory.

—o—

' He being dead, yet speaketh. ' "

erected in Clifton, and all are at present supplied with an evangelical ministry, the cause at Hope Chapel continues to prosper. A good congregation assembles to hear the word: the connected institutions flourish: and indications of spiritual benefit attest the Divine presence and blessing. Long, it is hoped, will this auspicious state of things be perpetuated, and the walls of this spiritual temple here be built up, through successive generations, "for a habitation of God through the Spirit."



Pastors.

HOPE CHAPEL, OPENED 1786.

Various Supplies.

Jay.

Jones.

Tracey.

Browning.

Evans.

Raban 1811.

Guy 1820.

Gregory..... 1832.

Luke 1853



CHAPTER X.

NEWFOUNDLAND STREET CHAPEL.

*“Testifying repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord
Jesus Christ.”*

GIDEON CHAPEL. — HUNTINGTON. — COWAN. — THOMAS WILSON. —
WOOLDRIDGE. — CRAIK AND MULLER. — DAVEY. — STONE. —
BRAKE. — ENLARGEMENT. — ROSE.

THE name which this edifice originally bore is supposed by some to have been somewhat expressive of its origin, and a memorial of the spirit by which it was dictated, and of the circumstances in which the religious interest connected with it was begun. It was called “Gideon Chapel”; whether to denote that the friends of truth here were “mighty men of valour,” or, that the “dew” of the divine blessing rested on their “fleece” when it was wanting upon others around, we must leave to be determined. Suffice it to say that through all its various changes, the truth of God has for the most part been maintained here, and is now triumphant, and that at present (1859) there are many gratifying tokens that the dew of heavenly influence (not to the exclusion of others,

but in grateful participation with them), is resting plentifully on this hill of the Lord's Zion.

About the year 1809, a few of the hearers at the Tabernacle, thinking in the exercise of what they supposed a superior discrimination, that the full gospel was not proclaimed within its honoured walls, resolved to separate from it, and to provide for themselves, not exactly "another gospel," but one in which the peculiar doctrines they had espoused should have greater prominence and regard. It was at the time when Dr. Hawker, of Plymouth, was in the zenith of his fame, and the influence of his ministry was threatening to diffuse an Antinomian tendency among the churches of every order in the west of England. From this influence however the churches of Bristol were happily preserved, except, as we believe, in the present instance, and this the Author of all truth and blessing has graciously overruled for much good. The individuals above referred to separated from the worship at the Tabernacle, and erected in Newfoundland Street a little sanctuary with the afore-mentioned name, in which they might unite for the service of God, and for hearing the doctrines which they preferred. They resorted at first to the celebrated WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, of London, and sought his counsel and aid. In the year 1810, that eccentric and high minded preacher came among them, and spent a few Sabbaths in propounding his extraordinary views, and flattering the predilections of his hearers. His success, however, was not great, nor did the influence of his visit continue long. The people were left to obtain supplies as best they could, and chose teachers of their own liking as long as they could succeed. For several years, this state of things continued, till about

the time when the memorable secession of the “new lights,” as they were called, took place from the established Church, and Mr. COWAN, one of that number, occupied the building, whilst Bethesda Chapel in Park Street was being prepared for his reception. From the time of his leaving it, it was very irregularly supplied, and frequently closed, until in the year 1820, the worship was altogether discontinued, and a heavy debt remained upon its walls.

In the year 1821, the late excellent Thomas Wilson, Esq., of London, was on a visit to Bristol, endeavouring to obtain contributions for his favourite object, the erection of the new Highbury College. On hearing that Gideon Chapel was closed, and thinking, with other friends, that there was room for another Independent Interest, and additional evangelical efforts in that part of Bristol, he generously engaged at his own expence to rent the chapel, and to provide for it suitable supplies. This he did by sending down students from the College, who preached as occasional labourers in the place, till, in 1822, the Rev. JOHN WOOLDRIDGE, who had just completed his studies, commenced as a visitor, his ministrations in the place. Attention was soon excited. The word of the truth of the gospel from his lips was welcomed by many, and a few devoted friends gathered around him by whom he was encouraged to prolong his stay, and think of this as the sphere of his future exertions. With this request, and the intimations of Divine Providence concerning it, he complied: and on the 23rd of October, 1823, was publicly ordained over the church at that time constituted, and the congregation assembling there. On that occasion Mr. Lowell, of Bridge Street, delivered the introductory

discourse, (which was afterwards printed) ; Dr. Ryland offered the ordination prayer ; Dr. William Harris (then tutor of Highbury), gave the charge ; Mr. Elliott, of Devizes, addressed the people ; and other ministers took part in the devotional services. The attendance soon began to increase. The chapel, which had been considerably altered and improved, was filled with attentive hearers ; and from month to month many pleasing evidences occurred of the power of the word, and of the presence of the Master of assemblies with His people. Much good was done in the name of Jesus, and souls were gathered into the fold of the chief Shepherd.

This improved state of things continued for several years, till, from various circumstances, Mr. Wooldridge was induced to exchange his sphere of labour for Norwood, in Surrey, to which place he removed in 1831, and from thence, a few years afterwards, to the West Indies, in connection with the London Missionary Society, where he died, a devoted Missionary of Christ, in Jamaica, in August, 1840.

The cause at Gideon now for a season declined, and its friends became discouraged and few, obtaining supplies from various sources as their opportunities and circumstances enabled them to do. For about two years at this period it was occupied by the brethren CRAIK and MULLER, who had just then begun to attract considerable attention in Bristol by their simplicity of character and devotion to their ministry, which they exercised here till, first Salem Chapel, and afterwards Bethesda, were ready for their reception. They were succeeded, after an interval, by the Rev. J. C. DAVEY from Weston-super-Mare, who entered

on his labours on the first Sabbath in August, 1840, but did not continue long. Mr. Stone, previously of Wickwar, followed, but after a few years' labours was obliged, from declining health, to retire. The chapel was encumbered with a considerable debt, and, for a season, closed for repairs. On its re-opening, various ministers officiated, until in December, 1847, the Rev. CHARLES BRAKE, from Crown Street Chapel, Soho, London, visited the people, and was invited, after a few Sabbaths' services, to settle among them. With this request he complied. He entered on his engagements in June, 1848, with fair prospects of usefulness, and for some time his popularity filled the place. The chapel soon required to be enlarged. This was accordingly done. It was almost re-built: and a new school room was erected, principally at the cost of a generous benefactor, who paid off the mortgage on the house in Wilson Street, and defrayed, in connection with other friends, the expenses of the enlargement, which, in 1849, brought it to its present dimensions. Mr. Brake continued his ministry for the space of about five years; after which, perplexities and troubles arising (not in relation to the church), he resigned his charge, and left Bristol in May, 1853.

The providence of God, which had kept a watchful eye over his cause at Gideon, now called Newfoundland Street Chapel, furnished it from Sabbath to Sabbath with various supplies, until, towards the close of 1853, the Rev. WILLIAM ROSE, of Sandwich, in Kent, where he had laboured acceptably for several years, was invited to supply the pulpit for a few weeks. His ministrations awakened the attention of the people, and produced an earnest desire

for his settlement among them. This he was induced prayerfully to consider : and was led, in January, 1854, to accept their unanimous invitation. In March of the same year he commenced his stated labours. His ministry has proved a blessing both to his charge, and to the vicinity. A numerous congregation, on the Sabbath, fills the place. An increasing church ; a flourishing Sabbath-school ; a local Christian Instruction Society ; and other benevolent institutions, indicate the presence of the Lord of the vineyard, the efficacy of His ordinances, and the prosperity of His work in this place. Long may it continue to prosper, and evidence be afforded that upon Gideon's fleece, as well as upon others around, the dew of the Divine blessing still copiously descends.



Ministers.

Huntington.

Cowan.

Wooldridge 1823 to 1831.

Craik and Müller.

Davey 1840.

Stone 1842.

Brake 1847 to 1853.

Rose 1854.

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CHAPTER XI.

ZION CHAPEL, BEDMINSTER.

"He loveth our nation, and hath built us a Synagogue."

CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM. — JOHN HARE, ESQ. — THE CLAIMS OF
BEDMINSTER. — SITE SECURED. — FOUNDATION LAID. — OPENING.
— VARIOUS SUPPLIES. — J. E. GOODE. — DAVID THOMAS, B.A. —
HIS ORDINATION. — ILLNESS. — RETIREMENT. — G. WOOD, B.A.

WE know not why the pious patriotism of the old dispensation may not be engrafted on the new ; or, rather, why, beneath its shadow, it should not spring up more frequently, and with greater fertility and power. It is equally congenial with its spirit, and equally conducive to the furtherance of its designs. Nay, more : it is suggested with additional power by the motives of redeeming love, and would, through the superior advantages of the gospel economy, be more subservient to the accomplishment of its gracious designs. If the erection of a synagogue under the law was a useful and benevolent work, how much more so must be the rearing of a sanctuary for Divine worship beneath the gospel ! The ancient Hebrew concentrated

and diffused the dim rays of the typical dispensation. The christian patriot, by the erection of a temple to the honour of his God, not merely provides for and perpetuates His worship, but concentrates and diffuses the light of the evangelical dispensation, amidst whose noon-day splendours the Cross appears, and the substance of the former shadows is revealed. Just in proportion to the superiority of the economy of grace is the higher value of a provision for its means and ordinances among men. The individual who, from love to God and to his brethren, erects an appropriate structure for the worship of the Eternal, and the proclamation within its walls of the glad tidings of salvation, confers a greater boon on society than he who endows a hospital, or wins a victory. The interests of both worlds are involved ; and the benefits accruing will stretch beyond the bounds of time, and accumulate when time is no more.

Mr. John Hare, formerly of Firfield House, on the Wells Road, was a citizen of Bristol whom God had greatly blessed in his temporal concerns. He came to the city an industrious young man, and by diligence, with perseverance, and the Divine blessing, rose to eminence and wealth, of which, soon after the prime of life he found himself in possession. In his early days his attention had been directed, by what means it is not now known, to the "one thing needful," and similar earnestness and assiduity to that which he applied to worldly affairs was now employed by him in reference to spiritual. Honesty and integrity were naturally characteristic of him, and these were exercised by him, with great simplicity of mind, on the all-important realities of an eternal world. The faithful preaching of the gospel on which he attended was the

means of still further enlightening and convincing his mind, and he was led earnestly to seek salvation by faith in the "only Name given under heaven among men by which we can be saved." On settling in life, he and his family fixed themselves for sacred privileges at Bridge Street, under the instructive ministry of the Rev. Samuel Lowell, and there, in due time, he first gave himself to the Lord, and then united in fellowship with His people.

It was after the noon-time of life, when God had blessed him with a rising family, a prosperous business, and a competence sufficient to retire, that his mind became impressed with the spiritual wants of a large portion of the community around him in that part of Bristol near which his residence stood, and through which he had frequently to pass. The population on either side of the water, in the lower part of Redcliffe Street, and in Bedminster, were at that time mournfully destitute of the means of grace, and of an adequate supply of evangelical instruction for its growing multitudes. This fact habitually possessed his mind, and prompted the earnest desire of attempting to make some provision for their welfare, by which the careless might be awakened, the wanderer reclaimed, and the ignorant taught the "things that belong to their peace." For a long time he waited, with anxious observation and hope, to secure a suitable spot of ground, until, at length, a plot standing in a most eligible situation, where two roads met, and the streams of thoroughfare diverged in different directions, offered itself, as appropriate for the object he had in view. He made inquiry: found it was transferable: agreed to terms: and immediately took measures for the accomplishment of the purpose on which his heart was

engaged. That spot is the commodious site on which Zion Chapel, Bedminster, now stands.

Having obtained possession of the soil, and fixed on the architectural plans by which the future sanctuary of God was to be reared, he forthwith proceeded to carry the design into effect. The foundation stone was laid by Mrs. Hare, on the 12th of May, 1829, and by the first of June, 1830, this "holy and beautiful house" was finished, and ready to be consecrated to the worship of the Most High. On the fifteenth of that month a large assembly of ministers and people met within its walls to welcome the auspicious day, and to unite in the solemn services among Protestant Dissenters on such an occasion. Having "come into His gates with thanksgiving, and entered into His courts with praise," the assembled multitude united in earnest prayer, which, with the reading of Scripture, was offered by the Rev. John Leifchild, then pastor of the church in Bridge Street Chapel. After this the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, of Glasgow, delivered an eloquent discourse from Romans x, 4, and 1 Timothy, i, 5, in which he powerfully enlarged on the uses of the law as subservient to the gospel, in leading the sinner to the righteousness of Christ for justification before God, and to purity, fidelity, and love, before man ; concluding with an earnest appeal on behalf of the future interests of the cause of truth in that place. In the evening of the day the services were resumed. The Rev. J. W. Percy, of Warwick, then supplying at the Tabernacle, engaged in prayer ; and the Rev. George Clayton, of London, preached from Roman xvi, 25-27, and left a suitable impression at the close of such proceedings on the minds of the people by ascribing all the glory to

“the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever.” Great was the day. Joyous was the occasion. The memory of it was embalmed in the hearts of many. And numerous and earnest were the desires expressed for the future peace and prosperity of “Zion.”

The chapel, which is of the usual order at that time obtaining among Independents, has three galleries, and is capable of containing about a thousand persons; with convenient rooms for prayer and social meetings, and Infant and Sunday-schools. It was erected at a cost of above £4,000, and was made over by the generous benefactor, on the 14th of October, 1830, to the care of twenty-four trustees, for the worship of God and the preaching of His holy word, according to the faith and order of the Congregational Dissenters.

From the time of its opening, to the month of September, 1832, a period of above two years, the pulpit was regularly supplied by various ministers from different parts of the kingdom, with the hope that in due time the great Head of the church would provide a suitable labourer for this interesting and important sphere of His vineyard. Acceptable and useful, in no small degree, were the ministrations of the servants of Christ who visited it at this period; and amongst them were some of the excellent of the earth, whose occasional services tended to give stability and popularity to the infant cause. At length the time for a settled pastor seemed to have arrived; and the attention of the people was directed to the Rev. JOHN EVERITT GOOD, of Salisbury, who, after several Sabbaths' engagements, was invited to settle with them. The invitation addressed to him was signed by above three hundred

seat-holders and others, and by the twenty-four trustees. Feeling satisfied that it was his duty to comply with such a request, he resigned his charge in Wiltshire, and entered on his stated duties at "Zion," on the 30th of September, 1832. On the 14th of November following, he was publicly recognized as the pastor and minister of the place: the Rev. Messrs. Dr. Ross, of Kidderminster; John Davies, of the Tabernacle; Thorp, of Castle Green; Elliott, of Devizes; Legge, of Bridge Street; Lucy, of Lodge Street; Jay, of Bath; and Winter, of Counterslip,—taking part in the solemnities of the occasion. At the close of the year a christian church was regularly formed; and on the first Sabbath in January, 1833, pastor and people sat down together to commemorate, for the first time in Zion Chapel, the wonders of the love of Him who died, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God."

For little more than a year "things went well in Judah," and the interests of this hopeful religious community seemed to enjoy the tokens of Divine care and benediction. But at the close of that period, some most unhappy circumstances occurred in relation to the conduct of the pastor, which alienated, first the founder of the chapel himself, and then other friends, from their attendance upon its ordinances. Over those mournful occurrences, which involved so deep a trial, and at the time spread so dark a cloud over "Zion," we deem it better now to throw the veil of oblivion, only expressing the hope that He who brings good out of evil, will overrule them for the advancement of His cause, and render them subservient to the glory of His name. The day approacheth that will reveal

them. Suffice it to say that they terminated in Mr. Good's resignation of the pastoral office, which he communicated to the people on the 2nd of December, 1834, and which was duly accepted by them.

After some vicissitudes of declension and revival, arising out of the unhappy circumstances to which we have referred, and through all of which the "great Shepherd of the sheep" provided suitable supplies for His flock, the church and congregation were directed, almost unanimously, to choose as their future pastor, an excellent young minister who had been introduced to them by Thomas Wilson, Esq., of London. This was the Rev. DAVID THOMAS, B.A., who had been trained at Highbury College, and completed his preparatory studies at Glasgow, with a view to the christian ministry among Independent Dissenters. During the summer and autumn of 1835, he spent successive Sabbaths with the people, and went in and out amongst them. The result was, that on the 24th of November in that year, he was affectionately and earnestly invited to become their stated minister; and truly gratifying, after what had occurred, were the unanimity, confidence, and love, which among all parties, were displayed. Mr. Thomas prayerfully took the important request into consideration, and on the 22nd of December, returned an affirmative reply. He commenced his pastoral labours on the second Sabbath of January, 1836; and on the 25th of February following, was publicly ordained, by prayer and the imposition of hands, to the sacred work assigned to his care. That solemn occasion was marked by a more than usual degree of solicitude and supplication, and deep was the interest felt in it by all. The principal parts of the service were

conducted by the Rev. Messrs. Burder, Summers, Haynes, Dr. Redford, Dr. Fletcher, and Dr. Halley—the last three of whom successively engaged in the ordination prayer, the charge, and the address to the people. Messrs. Winter, Lucy, Elliott, Johnson, and Brown, also assisted in the subsidiary devotional exercises: and the whole formed a season long to be remembered in the experience of not a few. The young minister gave himself, with becoming assiduity and zeal, to the discharge of the duties of his high vocation, and many were the indications of the Divine favour and help which through following years were enjoyed. In proportion to the strength which God had given him, he laboured, “in season, and out of season,” for the good of his charge. The church increased. The congregation was gradually established and enlarged. And, till the year 1841, pastor and people had cause to rejoice together in the faithfulness and love of their Lord and Saviour.

It pleased, however, the Supreme Disposer of all relations and events again to exercise the faith and patience of His people at “Zion” by the declining health of their beloved minister. For several months at this period he was laid aside from his work, and obliged to leave the interests of his charge to others, whilst he sojourned, with a view to physical improvement, at the sea side. The prospect, however, was darkened. Continued inability to labour constrained him at length to announce his intention to his flock of resigning his office over them; and though they earnestly requested him to reconsider the matter, and expressed their willingness to wait yet longer with the hope of his recovery, he felt it his duty to adhere to the decision

he had formed, as that which appeared to be the will of God concerning him. In an affecting communication from Sidmouth, dated June 2nd, 1842, he conveyed his resignation to the church, which was received with corresponding emotions of affection and regret, and each commended the other to the care and love of an unchanging Friend. In the first month of that year, exactly six years from the time of entering upon it, Mr. Thomas's stated ministry had closed among them.

The pulpit was now occupied by various and acceptable supplies for the space of about six months, at the close of which period the Rev. GEORGE WOOD, B.A., of Highbury College, who had preached for several Sabbaths among them, was cordially invited by the church and congregation to take the oversight of them in the Lord. Having sought Divine direction, and the counsel of valued brethren in the vineyard, Mr. Wood was led to accept the invitation, and on the 23rd of December, 1842, returned his reply. He entered on his pastoral engagements on the first Sabbath of the new year : and on Tuesday, the 28th of February, 1843, was publicly ordained at Zion Chapel to the work to which he was called. On that occasion the Rev. J. H. Godwin, then resident tutor of Highbury College, delivered the introductory discourse ; Mr. Roper, of Bridge Street, proposed the usual questions ; Mr. Haynes, of Brunswick, offered the ordination prayer ; Dr. Vaughan, of Kensington, gave the charge ; the Rev. J. Sherman, of London, preached to the people ; and Messrs. Crisp, Jack, Lucy, Winter, G. H. Davis, Taylor, Thoresby, Glanville, Tarbotton, and Stone, took part in the devotional services of the day. The ministers and deacons of the city, as well as his own people,

affectionately received their young brother among them. Many prayers were offered for his future success ; and from that to the present time (1859) he has dwelt among them, efficiently discharging the duties of his ministry, and enjoying the tokens of the Divine presence in the continued peace and progress of the church committed to his care.

Who will not exclaim, on contemplating the origin, and marking the varied course, of this interesting cause—

“Seat of my friends and brethren, hail !
How can my tongue, O Zion, fail
To bless thy loved abode ?
How cease the zeal that in me glows
Thy good to seek, whose walls enclose
The city of my God ?”



Ministers.

ZION CHAPEL, BEDMINSTER, OPENED 1830.

Good from 1832 to 1834.
Thomas 1836 to 1842.
Wood 1843.



CHAPTER XII.

ANVIL STREET CHAPEL.

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”

“POPULOUS NEIGHBOURHOOD.—REFLECTIONS.—CHRISTIAN FRIENDS.
FIRST EFFORTS.—CHAPEL BUILT.—OPENED.—FIRST MINISTER.
—BLESSING.—RESULTS.

How beautiful was the mind of Jesus! and how blessed to possess it! He looked abroad on a needy, famished, dying world, and was “moved with compassion.” The more numerous the immortal souls that were destitute of instruction, and of the saving knowledge of Himself, the more solicitous He was to provide for them. If one human spirit surpasses in worth a world, what must be the value of many? How precious their interests: how vast their necessities: how momentous, all but overwhelming, the thought of their aggregate destiny! What can be done to save them?

Impressed with such reflections as these, awakened and deepened by the Spirit of all illumination and grace, a few devoted christians, members of some of the churches in

Bristol, were deeply affected with the spiritual condition of many of their fellow citizens, especially among the outcasts in the less known, but thickly populated parts of their city, where Satan's seat was, and vice, immorality, and ungodliness held their sway. Multitudes there were of whom it might be said, "No man cared for their souls." They slept and rose, they ate and drank, they lived and died, without hope, and without God in the world. The means of grace were utterly unknown among them. The parochial church was either too distant, or never attracted their attention. The Sabbaths of the Lord were totally neglected, or profaned; and the recreations of the public-house, the vain song, and the lascivious dance, occupied its sacred hours. Parents and children were alike involved in the ignorance, destitution, and irreligion which prevailed. The one neglected their highest interests, and cared not for their offspring: the other were growing up into life, an easy prey to the temptations of the wicked, the delusions of the world, and the destroyer of immortal souls.

On these things the wise and the good looked with philanthropic and christian consideration. Their eye affected their heart. Touched with a feeling akin to that of their Divine Master, they could not but exercise a tender commiseration over such a scene, and they promptly inquired, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" They were acquainted with the remedy, and wished to extend it. They had tasted of the "living waters," and would fain make them spring up in the dry and thirsty ground. They knew that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so was also the Son of man to be lifted up," and they would fain have Him lifted up there.

Among those thus thinking and feeling at that time, with others of their christian brethren, were three sons of an excellent sire, who for many years had been identified with the cause of Christ at the Tabernacle, and had, for a considerable period the chief management of its affairs. The family was esteemed and loved by all who knew them, and to it, both in the past and present generation, the interests of religion in Bristol are much indebted, not merely for pecuniary support, but for what is of much more value, personal exertion. The three brothers were men of faith, piety, and prayer, and each of them active in some particular sphere. The eldest was devoted to the Tabernacle. The second was chiefly instrumental in the origination, and for a while, the support of Anvil Street Chapel.

It begun, as frequently in other cases, with the instruction of the young. The numbers of the rising generation in that vicinity who were growing up in ignorance and vice, led to the formation of what at that time (about 1830) was called a "Fragment School," an institution which in London had been found exceedingly useful, and was recommended in Bristol as adapted for that class of the juvenile community now embraced by what are termed "Ragged Schools." One such was formed in Avon Street. A room was hired, where, at first by paid teachers, many of these in the afternoon of the Sabbath were gathered together and taught. To these by various friends the words of instruction were given in the form of an address before they separated, at which their parents also were invited to attend. Observing a disposition to hear, it was proposed to hold divine service on the evening of the Lord's-day, for the good of the adult population who might be willing to

come. This, at first, sometimes a student from the Baptist Academy, or a friend from the Tabernacle, or from one of the other churches in the city, was engaged to undertake, in which he was at liberty to read a sermon, or give an address, as he preferred. The room soon became filled. A spirit of hearing was awakened. A larger space was necessary ; and this by a little arrangement was provided. Two services were now held, both morning and evening. The Bristol Itinerant Society furnished its assistance for this part of the field, and by several of its agents, in connection with other friends, was it frequently supplied. The blessing of the great Master rested upon these efforts, and some pleasing instances of conversion occurred. It was soon manifest that good was to be done. The field was "white unto the harvest," and invited the reaper's sickle. A sanctuary must be provided : a house for God erected : and room given in which willing hearers might listen to "the words of this life."

Our friend, in conjunction with others, immediately looked round for a suitable site for such a purpose, and took upon themselves the responsibility of the procedure. After much inquiry they were directed to the spot on which the chapel in Anvil Street now stands ; and having obtained possession of it, and prepared for the building, the foundation-stone was laid. It was accompanied with much solicitude, many prayers, and some difficulties, but faith in the gospel, and hope of success, animated them to proceed. The structure rose. The smiles of the great Architect rested upon it ; and in due time, a commodious edifice, forty feet square, was completed, and dedicated to the worship of the Most High. It was opened in

the year 1834, and now became filled with attentive hearers.

The next object of solicitude to the friends of the gospel in this place, and especially to its principal benefactor, was to obtain a suitable labourer for this portion of the vineyard, who would cultivate the barren soil, and scatter publicly and privately the good seed of the kingdom amongst the people. In this, after much waiting, and many prayers, they were directed by the good providence of God, who sent among them at this time the Rev. JAMES TAYLER, of Dursley, who had been an acceptable occasional labourer in the towns and villages of that vicinity, as well as in other parts of Gloucestershire. He had not been favoured with an education for the ministry, but from natural talents, acquirements, and eminent piety, was peculiarly adapted for such a station, and brought with him an earnest love to Christ and the souls of men, determined to know nothing among them but "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This was the kind of labour required. Mr. Tayler gave himself to the work. The people heard him gladly. And after several months' services he received an earnest invitation to labour permanently among them.

A church had previously been formed, consisting of ten or twelve members, chiefly from the Tabernacle, who now cordially united to request Mr. Tayler to take the oversight of them in the Lord. This he consented to do, and in the year following that in which the chapel was opened, viz., 1835, entered on his stated labours among them, being ordained to this office at the Tabernacle on the 30th of November that year. On that occasion the Rev. Messrs. Gregory, of Hope Chapel, Clifton; Jack, of Castle Green;

Davies, then pastor of the Tabernacle; Lucy, of Lodge Street; Burder, of Stroud; and Glanville, of Kingswood, officiated: and Mr. Lucy preached to the people at their own chapel on the Sabbath evening following. It was a season of deep and solemn interest to many. The statements of the minister ordained were affecting to all present. It was felt that the great Head of the church was in the midst of the assembly, and by His power and grace one individual was brought that day to himself, who lives to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour. It was a token for good, and a pledge of blessings to come.

Those blessings followed. Mr. Tayler devoted himself to the diligent culture of this long neglected spot. Besides preaching and teaching on the Sabbath day, he visited the people privately, instructing from house to house, and reasoning with them out of the Scriptures on the things pertaining to their salvation. He found many of them in the lowest state of degradation and immorality, and was instrumental of snatching some of them as brands from the burning. From habits of excess, Sabbath desecration, open vice, or heartless indifference, they were awakened to inquire after the things which belonged to their peace, and not a few of them became trophies of renewing and sanctifying grace. Before, they were "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another," and the strong man armed, held his goods in peace. But a stronger than he came. The prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered. Through a blessing on the use of means, and the power of God accompanying his word, a visible change ensued. The Spirit of God came

down upon the valley : there was a shaking among the dry bones : and a "living army" for the Captain of salvation arose.

It was deemed proper that for the first three years, Mr. Tayler should be considered a "Home Missionary," of the London Society, and professedly derive his support from them, though that support was previously furnished by the three brothers to whom we have referred, one of them taking, through all, an active part in everything relating to the interests of Anvil Street Chapel. By his instrumentality, and as the principal donor, the structure had been reared ; and by him were its services attended generally twice on the Lord's day. Previous to the minister's coming, he himself presided at the prayer meetings ; and afterwards, for several years, was usually present to take a part in them ; whilst over the Sabbath-school, in the afternoon, he watched with personal attention and care. The school, congregation, and church, grew and prospered. At the end of three years, the connection with the Home Missionary Society ceased, and the people were desirous and determined to take upon themselves the support of the minister whom God had sent among them. This, with the assistance of friends in Bristol, they were enabled to do.

With ardent gratitude to the God of all grace, the pastor and the devoted friends of this cause, saw His blessing resting upon their efforts, and His word having "free course," though not without opposition and reproach, among the people. From Sabbath to Sabbath, through several years, the number of the attendants continued to increase, and once, twice, and a third time, was the chapel enlarged, to make room for those who were desirous of

hearing the word, and worshipping within its walls. These enlargements were effected, first by the erection of a front gallery, then of side galleries, and at last by lengthening the building twenty feet, so that now it stands 60 by 40, and is capable of accommodating a congregation of about 600 persons. At each of these enlargements their generous benefactor promised to double what the people raised. With this excitement and encouragement to the work, the thing was done willingly, and no debt remains.

Peculiarly interesting would it be to record, did space permit, or our object require, numerous instances of the power of converting grace in this place, and of the happy change effected on some of the most hopeless of transgressors, as well as the general progress of religion in the locality to the present day. The population of this part of the parish of St. Philip was once a bye-word and a reproach among the people ; but now, old things have passed away, darkness has given place to light, confusion to order, and in a good degree "all things have become new." "Instead of the thorn has come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar, the myrtle-tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Persons of the most vicious character have been reclaimed, and restored to "the Shepherd and Bishop of souls." The ignorant have been taught. The young gathered in ; and a willing people formed to shew forth the Redeemer's praise. During the ten years that intervened between 1840 and 1850 the progress of truth in the renovation and ingathering of the lost was somewhat remarkable. On one occasion, when the late excellent Richard Knill, on a visit to Bristol, was preaching to the congregation, knowing that

they were eminently a praying people, he exhorted them to special supplication at the throne of grace that during the coming year, not one Sabbath might pass without a blessing on the word, to the conversion of at least one soul ; and it was an encouraging fact, that at the close of the year, when reviewing the number which had been added to the church, just fifty-two individuals had been received into the fellowship of the people of God. In that fellowship, the church, on the average, numbers about two hundred ; and up to the present time (1859), during the twenty-four years of its existence, not fewer than nine hundred have been gathered in, many of whom in death have avowed their trust in the Saviour, and others are still living to His praise. Indeed, "the hand of the Lord" has evidently been with them. The people, though for the most part poor in this world, have been rich in faith, united in love, and earnest in prayer. "At one time," says their devoted pastor, "we had a hundred who might have been called upon to lead our devotions in social worship : we had frequently as many at the prayer meeting on Lord's-day morning : we have still three prayer meetings on Sabbath at the vestry, and three at private cottages : and although we are not so many in number as we once were, I am happy to say we are in peace, and not without tokens of the Divine blessing."

"This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." To him be all the praise. He has honoured the faith, and the efforts, and the prayers of His servants, and shewed us that still, wherever the gospel comes, it is "the power of God unto salvation." Let all the friends of truth be encouraged by it, in these days, to lift up the Cross in

every desolate spot, and in the midst of every dense population, assured that He who died thereon "will draw all men unto Him."

"This is the word of truth and love,
Sent to the nations from above ;
Jehovah here resolves to shew
What his Almighty grace can do."

"This remedy did wisdom find
To heal diseases of the mind ;
This sov'reign balm, whose virtues can
Restore the ruined creature man."

"The gospel bids the dead revive ;
Sinners obey the voice and live :
Dry bones are raised, and clothed afresh,
And hearts of stone are turn'd to flesh."

Let each, and all, devoutly add—

"May but this grace my soul renew,
Let sinners gaze and hate me too ;
The word that saves me does engage
A sure defence from all their rage."



Ministers.

Opened 1834.

Tayler 1835.

CHAPTER XIII.

BRUNSWICK CHAPEL.

**"The things which have happened have fallen out rather
unto the furtherance of the Gospel."**

VITALITY OF INDEPENDENCY.—DIVISION AT CASTLE GREEN.—
SECESSION.—ASSEMBLIES FOR WORSHIP.—BAPTIST LECTURE
ROOM.—THE PITHAY.—SUPPLIES.—A CHURCH FORMED.—DR.
FLETCHER.—NEW CHAPEL.—ITS FOUNDATION.—OPENING.—
FIRST MINISTER.—HIS ILLNESS, AND WITHDRAWMENT.—
BEIGHTON.—HARTLAND.

THE oak of the forest braves the storms of many winters, and by all the tempests that blow, and the winds that threaten it, but strikes its roots the deeper, spreads its branches the wider, and shades with its luxuriant foliage a larger space of its native soil, beneath which a more numerous flock may repose at noon-day. Such is Independency. Or, rather, it is that beautiful "Vine" which God has brought out of Egypt; which, though "her hedges" may sometimes appear to be "broken down," and "all they that pass by the way do pluck her," and "the wild boar out of the wood doth waste it," yet it is a glorious plant in

the vineyard, which the right hand of the Most High hath planted, and a "branch which He has made strong for Himself."

It is this, we think, which constitutes one of the distinguishing and commendatory principles of Independency, that in accordance with Scripture authority, it can adapt itself to all the varieties of circumstances in which it may be placed, and subordinate them to its own purposes. It is irrepressible, and indestructible. The more it is afflicted the more it grows. There is in it an elasticity, a self-regulating, and self-constituting power, which, in dependence on the Divine blessing, secures its growth and prosperity. It sustains and reproduces itself. However depressed at one time, it will flourish at another. However apparently divided, it is substantially inherent and one; and however threatened by external assaults, or internal commotions, it is able to sustain the shock, and survive the danger. "The things which happen" to it generally turn out for "the furtherance of the gospel;" and even its imperfections and divisions, occasioned by the different views, and but partially sanctified spirit of christians in the present world, and on account of which the enemy may seem for a while to rejoice, are overruled by an invisible Worker, for the production of greater good, an increase of evangelical operation, and a larger amount of spiritual benefit to the community.

This has been sufficiently illustrated in the past history of Independency. It has been already confirmed by the narratives of this volume. And it will be more abundantly elucidated and proved by the records of the present chapter.

It will be remembered that, in a former article, on the church at Castle Green, it was stated that there arose, in the year 1833, a somewhat unhappy division in that respectable christian society, on the choice of a minister. Their recently excellent and honoured pastor, the Rev. Wm. Thorp, had been called to his rest, and the mighty influence of his spirit and talents in the ministry no longer existed as the attractive centre, and bond of union among the people. A few months had passed away. They were called to the exercise of their christian liberty in one of the most momentous and difficult occasions of it, which the church of the New Testament confers, and in which a more than ordinary amount of "the wisdom that cometh from above" is required. This had been most earnestly sought and implored. But human nature, at its best estate, is not perfect, nor is it likely in the present imperfect world, that similar views and feelings will always obtain among a large body of fellow-worshippers. Happily for us, among Independents, the exceptions to union are but few. For the most part concord and love prevail, and the minority, actuated by honourable motives for the good of the whole, peacefully acquiesce with the majority, in the choice of an under shepherd in the fold. This is our rule. Exceptions will sometimes occur : properly and justifiably so, when the minority is so considerable as to forbid it, and a greater amount of spiritual good would be effected by their withdrawal. It was so here.

The minority which could not acquiesce in the choice of the Rev. John Jack to be the successor of Mr. Thorp at Castle Green, though such in point of numbers, embraced some of the most pious, intelligent, and long-standing

friends of the cause of Christ in that important community, whose fathers before them had been pillars of the Church of God in that place, and who themselves had laboured, and given, and prayed much for its welfare. They could not, after much prayer, consideration, and forbearance, conscientiously unite in the election of that individual to be their future pastor ; and they expressed their difficulties, and their determination to their fellow-christians in every appropriate way. They stated their objections in private : and when the day of election came, their votes were carefully and peacefully given, to the intent that they could not view the present candidate for the pastorate as a suitable instrument for promoting the cause of the Redeemer in that part of his inheritance. The majority, however, which there happened to be in numbers, decided the other way. And the minister in question, with perfect knowledge of all the circumstances, thought it right, as we have already seen, to listen to an invitation so presented, and make Castle Green his future home.

No alternative remained to the large minority but peacefully to withdraw. This, without concert, they did. There was no previous consultation, no secret agreement, among them. Every one acted, as christians in such a matter ever should, on his or her own responsibility, and as having to give an account to the great Master and Lord of all. The consequence was, that the week after the decision was made, and the new pastor's affirmative reply had been received, they found that thirty-seven church members, and sixty-four seat-holders of the congregation, had agreed together in their dissentient views, and had come away from their long-enjoyed, and still much-loved, ecclesiastical

home. It was a painful season, a reluctant dissolution of sacred ties, and a severance of associations and attachments, which nothing but a sense of duty to the one Lord and King of Zion, and to the future interests of His cause, enabled them to attempt or to sustain. This animated them in all. They were surrounded with difficulties, and deprived of privileges, as sheep without a shepherd, and now without a fold : and they knew not where to look, or whither to go, but to Him who has said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will answer thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

To Him they referred their cause. In private, at the family altar, and in their social and friendly intercourse, many earnest supplications were sent up to the heavenly throne for wisdom to guide, and grace to constrain them to act aright in their peculiar and responsible circumstances : and having committed their ways to the Lord, they took counsel together to consider what He required of them, what His cause and church demanded, and what in their position, "Israel ought to do." In due time the answer of Heaven appeared. They were led by a way which they knew not. From step to step an invisible Hand conducted them forward, and having sustained them "through fire and through water," it brought them at last "into a wealthy place," in that peaceful and prosperous tabernacle of their Zion in Brunswick Square, where, in process of time, they were directed to fix the place of their tent, and stretch forth the curtains of their habitation, to lengthen their cords, and strengthen their stakes, in the heritage of the Lord.

As soon as they had agreed, after united prayer and consultation, that it was a duty which they owed to the

cause of Christ, to the interests of Nonconformity, and to the spiritual concerns of their fellow-citizens in Bristol, to seek the establishment of another Independent church and congregation in the city, they set themselves with becoming assiduity to realize the design. Their first solicitude was to secure a suitable place for temporary worship; and this they were enabled, for the first two Sabbaths, to do, by the kindness of the committee of the Baptist Academy in Stokes' Croft, who willingly favoured them with their large Lecture-room for their accommodation. Here they were ministered to, for a short season, by excellent men who fraternally sympathized with them, and came at their request to speak the word among them; the Rev. Spedding Curwen, then of Frome, spending the first Sabbath with them, and preaching to them from the words of Moses to Israel, "The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you." Afterwards they engaged the old Meeting-house in the Pithay, and this they occupied in the morning and evening of the Sabbath, for six successive months, provided for by various ministers as before. Whilst here, on a visit from their friend the late Rev. Dr. Fletcher, of Stepney, whose judicious counsel and weighty sanction they had frequently enjoyed, a christian church was regularly formed among them, on the evening of the 25th of April, 1834; and thirty-nine individuals, formerly members at Castle Green, were united in the bonds of christian fellowship, it being agreed also that their two valued brethren, Messrs. Robert Fletcher and William Armstrong, who had been deacons in their former connection, and to whom the cause of religion both at Castle Green, and in later times at Brunswick Chapel, has been

much indebted, should fill that office among them. On the Sabbath following Dr. Fletcher preached, and administered to the infant flock, for the first time, the Supper of the Lord. For nineteen successive Sabbaths they enjoyed the word and ordinances, with the weekly services intervening, in the venerable sanctuary of the Pithay, and often found it good to be there.

The next object of their solicitude and their prayers was to fix on a suitable locality in which to erect another temple for the Lord of Hosts, and the worship of His holy name : and in this they were remarkably assisted by concurrent circumstances, which pointed them to the eligible site they now occupy, and on which their new sanctuary stands. Many were the difficulties which at first surrounded their procedure, and many the considerations which had to be entertained before they could decide on so important a step ; but these, through judicious counsel, and the favouring hand of Divine Providence, gradually gave way ; and by their own liberality, and that of their friends, they were enabled to realise their fondest wishes and most important designs. Accordingly, the ground was secured, the conveyance made, the plan of the future edifice fixed upon, and preparations made for laying the foundation stone. This took place on the morning of the 25th of June, 1834, when, in the midst of a large concourse of interested spectators, the Rev. Dr. Redford, of Worcester, performed the work, having first delivered an appropriate address on the blessings of Christianity, and its adaptation to ameliorate the social condition of mankind, as well as to prepare them for a future world. Other ministers attended, and took part in the services of the occasion. For the

future sanctuary and its worshippers a union was claimed with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity : and within the cavity of its foundation stone, among other memorials, was deposited a brass plate, with this inscription:

“TO THE TRIUNE GOD,

This stone, the foundation of a House consecrated to His worship,
Was laid on the twenty-fifth day of June, in the year of
Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four,
By the Rev. GEORGE REDFORD, D.D., of Worcester.

Here, whilst this edifice shall stand, may the pure
Doctrines of the Cross be faithfully preached
with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

In the meanwhile, during the progress of the building, as they were obliged to vacate the Pithay meeting at the close of six months, the stipulated time, they were anxiously and diligently employed in erecting first, and without delay, the large vestry, or school-room, of the new chapel, that in it they might assemble for temporary accommodation till the sanctuary itself should be finished. This, through the unwearied attention of their able and gratuitous architect, Mr. William Armstrong, and the application of the labourers, they were enabled to do, and, without the loss of a single Sabbath, removed from the Pithay to the new and spacious school-room on Lord's-day, Sept. 21st, 1834, their friend Dr. Fletcher being with them ; and within its walls they worshipped, for about eight months, till the rising edifice was fit for their reception. Here, too, they were much favoured with regular and efficient supplies, and oftentimes enjoyed the presence of the Lord of the Sabbath among them.

The new structure was rapidly advancing. The zeal of its friends, the diligence of the building committee, the

constant superintendence of the architect, and the labours of the workmen, were all crowned with the Divine blessing, and in due time the top-stone was brought forth with acclamations of joy and praise. It was a goodly edifice. It stands now an ornament to the Square, nearly one side of which it occupies, and is a neat and appropriate model of chapel-building. There is nothing superfluous, nothing wanting. Its elevation, its interior, its accommodations, its vestry, school-room, and adjacent burial-ground, all constitute it one of the most convenient sanctuaries of our land, capable of seating about eleven hundred persons ; and at a cost of nearly £5,000, it was paid for within the space of a few years. Long will it stand, a monument of the voluntary principle in connection with zeal for the honour of Christ, and the welfare of immortal souls.

The opening and dedication of this "holy and beautiful house" to the worship and service of the Eternal constituted a memorable era in the experience and lives of many. The services took place on Wednesday, the 6th of May, 1835, and were attended by a large body of the ministers and people of the city, and others from the various congregations of the neighbourhood, as well as from a greater distance. It was a solemn and impressive occasion. After the usual reading of Holy Scripture, and the dedicatory prayer, the Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, ascended the pulpit, and preached for the first time within its walls the glad tidings of Redeeming Love, in a sermon from I. Timothy i. 15—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners : " in which he expatiated with his usual pathos and fervour on the great doctrine of the Atonement, and the necessity of embracing

it as the only foundation of our hope. In the evening, after renewed devotional exercises, the Rev. Dr. Fletcher, of Stepney, delivered an able discourse on ministerial labour, from I. Cor. iii. 6, 7, and 8th verses—"I have planted, Apollos watered, &c.:" in which he instructively dwelt on the diversity of ministerial gifts, the harmony of ministerial exertions, the source of ministerial success, and the rewards of ministerial fidelity, all harmonizing together, through the riches of sovereign grace, for the accomplishment of one and the same glorious design. On the following Sabbath, the opening services were continued, when the Rev. Dr. Redford, of Worcester, and the Rev. John Thorp, then of Huddersfield, addressed the assembled multitudes, who separated, as on the preceding day, rejoicing in what God had done for His people, and imploring that they might see "still greater things than these."

By far the most important matter for the consideration and prayers of the newly-formed church and congregation now had to come before them, and indeed had already occupied the earnest thought and supplications of the members of this christian fraternity. They had met for consultation upon it. They had made it the subject of individual and united prayer, and had looked with an attentive eye to all the intimations of Divine providence for direction in the choice of a pastor, to go in and out among them, and feed them with knowledge and understanding in the fear of the Lord. To many excellent discourses had they listened, and with the visits of many faithful servants of Christ had they been favoured in their temporary and destitute condition, but now the time was come when they must consider and decide by what human voice their new temple should be

filled, and who should permanently proclaim among them the unsearchable riches of the Son of God. They proceeded carefully, prayerfully, unitedly, and waited in faith and hope for the blessing. At length, after having preached among them for several Sabbath-days, the Rev. THOMAS HAYNES, of Boston, was unanimously invited to become their pastor.

Mr. Haynes was educated for the ministry in the Academy at Hoxton, and for several years had been occupied with success in a sphere of pastoral labour in Lincolnshire. On receiving the united invitation of the church and congregation assembling in Brunswick Chapel, he felt it his duty to take it into immediate consideration, and after consultation and prayer was directed to send an affirmative reply. This he did in the month of October : and fixed on the first Sabbath of the ensuing year for the commencement of his stated ministry amongst them. His "entrance in" unto the people was accompanied with many tokens of the Divine benediction ; and on the 23rd of February, 1836, the public recognition of the pastoral relation between him and them took place. In the services of that occasion, the Rev. Messrs. Curwen, of Frome ; Dr. Halley, of Highbury College ; Lucy, of Bristol ; Elliott, of Devizes ; Dr. Redford, of Worcester ; Dr. Fletcher, of Stepney ; and J. Burder, of Stroud,—were respectively engaged. For successive years Mr. Haynes continued to prosecute his ministerial labours, in his new and important sphere, with ability, diligence, and success ; and many accessions to the church of Christ, both from other parts of the household of faith, and as the fruits of his ministrations, accrued. The interests of Zion became established. Different organizations for usefulness

were formed. The Sabbath-school progressed pleasingly. The public assemblies were numerous and respectable. The weekly services were well attended: the Pastor's private visitations, in sickness and in health, were appreciated and enjoyed: and all things indicated, beneath the Divine blessing, a state of progress and prosperity. But, in the fourteenth year of his ministry, it pleased God, in His wise and inscrutable providence, to visit His servant with affliction, and to prostrate his strength in the way. In the month of September, 1849, he was obliged to suspend his labours, and to request the church to provide assistance and supplies for the pulpit for a season, in the hope that absence and rest might renovate his strength, and permit him in due time to return. This, by a willing people, was cheerfully done. For about six months he withdrew, and fellow-servants in the ministry took his place, from Sabbath to Sabbath, in the house of the Lord. It was hoped that the calm of retirement, and other means resorted to, would have been effectual for his restoration, so as to have enabled him to resume his personal labours among the people of his care. But in vain. Weakness and disorder continued and increased, and in February, 1850, Mr. Haynes was compelled to intimate to his attached flock the probability that he should not be able to return among them. The communication was received with deep sympathy and affection. Their prayers were offered on his behalf. They formed suitable plans to meet their existing circumstances, and still indulged the hope of his recovery. But the Supreme Disposer of all events had otherwise designed, and on the 20th of March, 1850, a letter was received from their afflicted friend, then on a

visit to Cheltenham, containing the final resignation of his pastoral charge, and his affectionate farewell of the flock with whom he had been associated in the service of Christ, and for whose spiritual benefit he had laboured for about fourteen years. The intelligence was read to the assembled church and congregation on the following Lord's-day, by the minister then officiating. It produced a lively sensation among the people, and measures were immediately adopted to testify their attachment and esteem, and the general sympathy felt with him in this dispensation of the Lord. This was done by a substantial pecuniary testimonial, promptly raised and presented; and he and they commended each other to the Divine benediction.

Thus deprived of pastoral oversight, this well-ordered christian society resorted to appropriate means for supplying their vacant pulpit, and in due time procured another pastor. Various ministers were heard. Their attention and choice were fixed on the Rev. JOHN TIMOTHY BEIGHTON, who for about six years had been stationed over the Independent church at Bideford, in Devonshire. He was the son of a devoted Missionary of the London Society at Penang in the East, and had studied for the ministry at Coward College, where he had enjoyed both the advantages of that institution and those of the neighbouring University College, London. In the year 1844, he was ordained at Bideford. Various circumstances, in 1850, had induced him to think of a removal, and on receiving, after several Sabbaths' labours, an all-but unanimous call to the pastorate at Brunswick Chapel, he felt it his duty, without delay, to comply with the request. The invitation was communicated on the 22nd of August, 1850. On the 2nd

of September, he returned an affirmative reply : and on the 6th of October commenced his regular ministry. With zeal and energy he devoted himself to it, and was instrumental in forming various classes for Bible instruction, and other educational advantages. His public services were well sustained ; and indications of the Divine blessing were seen in the additions made to christian fellowship from year to year, and in the efficient state of the congregational institutions. But at the close of the year 1854, Mr. Beighton was earnestly requested by the Directors of the London Missionary Society to become an agent at home for its interests, by visiting the churches and congregations of the provinces, with a view to promote a missionary spirit among them, and augment their contributions to this sacred cause. He was deemed by the directors in London a suitable person, in conjunction with others, for such a service, and was accordingly invited by them to dissolve his present pastoral connection, and devote himself entirely to this department of labour in the Lord's vineyard. In compliance with such a request, sustained as it was also by one from the secretary of the society addressed to the people, Mr. Beighton prepared to quit the present sphere of his duties, and on the 19th of January, 1855, conveyed to the people of his charge an explanatory and affectionate farewell. Under the circumstances, the church had no alternative but to receive it, and reciprocally to commend their late pastor to the guidance and care of the great Lord of all. Mr. Beighton closed his labours at Brunswick on Sabbath, the 21st of January, 1855.

Immediately on receiving the communication which dissolved their relation to their recent pastor, the church again

assembled to implore the Divine direction and superintendence of their concerns. They committed themselves to the care of the chief Shepherd, and He graciously heard their prayers, and pointed to them the way in which they should go. Amongst other supplies who had been introduced to them, and to whom they had listened with interest and profit during the time of their destitution, was the Rev. EDWIN JOSEPH HARTLAND, from Warrington, in Lancashire, who for a period had been labouring as a stated minister in that town. He was educated for the ministerial work at Cheshunt College, under the tuition of the late Dr. John Harris, to whose instructions he had attended with assiduity and care, and had been ordained to the sacred office at Chatteris, in Cambridgeshire. At Warrington he had been useful for about five years, in planting and watering that portion of the church of God ; and, at the request of the committee of the church at Brunswick Chapel, visited it in May, 1855, for an introduction to the people. Five Sabbaths were spent among them ; at the close of which he received a unanimous and urgent invitation to become their pastor. This request he retired prayerfully and candidly to consider, and sought counsel for his decision, both from God and man. The result, after a few intervening weeks, was a cordial and affectionate acceptance of it. On the 12th of August, 1855, he commenced, amidst auspicious circumstances, and a people willing to receive him, his public ministrations, in the name of the Lord ; which to this day, December, 1859, he continues with efficiency, acceptance, and success, to discharge.

Such has been the history of the church of Christ at Brunswick Chapel to the present time. In zeal and union,

in enterprize and progress, it has been thus favoured. Its annual contributions to the Missionary cause, the Gloucestershire County Union, the Bristol Itinerant Society, and other local evangelical institutions, have been well sustained. In its fellowship at present there are above two hundred members, including six deacons and their pastor. From it three have entered the ministry, and are now occupying useful stations in the church of God, viz., the Rev. W. W. Fletcher, late of Throop, in Hampshire ; Rev. H. Quick, of Castle Green ; and Rev. V. Sells, of South Petherton ; besides two students, now in New College, London.

Long may the cloud of the Divine glory rest upon this tabernacle of our Israel, and within its walls the precious truths of "the everlasting gospel" be heard through successive generations : whilst, as time rolls on, the prayers of God's people come up for a memorial before Him, and the ancient promise is fulfilled,—“Of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her, and the Highest Himself shall establish her.” So shall her walls be “Salvation,” and her gates “Praise.”



Ministers.

OPENED, 1835.

Haynes	1836 to 1850,
Beighton	1850 to 1855,
Hartland	1855,



CHAPTER XIV.

KINGSLAND CHAPEL, DINGS.

"Go ye out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

DESTITUTE MULTITUDES.—EARLY EFFORTS.—RENEWED ATTENTION.
—SCHOOLS FORMED.—INCREASED EXERTIONS.—VARIOUS SUCCESS.—A CHAPEL BUILT.—OPENED BY JOHN WILLIAMS.—LABOURERS.—T. E. THORESBY.—YOUNG.—LOSSES.—PRATT.—BARTON HILL.

WITHOUT the limits of the ancient city of Bristol, towards the north-east, in the parish of St. Philip, lies a district called "the Dings," which has been built over and inhabited at a comparatively recent date. Many are still living who can remember the erection of the first house, in a locality now containing eight or nine thousand souls. Thus rapidly rising into existence, it is not surprising that there should have been at first a great deficiency in the provision for the spiritual welfare of the people. But the attention of the servants of Christ was soon directed to it. With their characteristic energy, the Wesleyan Methodists made the first effort to supply this destitution, by the opening of a

Sabbath-school in the further part of the district, known by the name of "Tyler's Fields." This school, which has been for the most part efficiently maintained, continues to the present time, and has been of great utility. But this was little among so many ; and others came to their help. A few friends connected with the Baptist body, acquainted with the wants of the neighbourhood, opened a room for preaching on Sabbath afternoons, and made some efforts besides, for the religious instruction of the masses around ; but, after much discouragement, were constrained to give up the attempt. It was soon after this, in the year 1835, that the interest of a christian gentleman was awakened to this uncultivated spot, to whom the Dings owes a debt of gratitude which is willingly acknowledged by all.

A junior member of the family at the Tabernacle, to which we have had occasion in these Memorials before to refer, and at that time connected with the Tabernacle Sunday-school, was conversing with a christian brother who knew something of the Dings, when the religious wants of that neighbourhood became the subject of their conversation. It was the first time his attention had been particularly directed to the place, and on the next Lord's day, in company with his friend, he visited the locality. His spirit was deeply affected by its evident destitution of religious privileges, and he determined to attempt something for its spiritual advantage. On a subsequent Thursday evening, accompanied by two or three others, he commenced a cottage service in "George's-place." On the following Sabbath evening a more public service was held, when the word was spoken by a member of the Countess of Huntingdon's congregation. The room was completely filled, and

considerable interest was obviously awakened. Encouraged by this success, our friend, on the next Sabbath afternoon, prevailed on some pious ladies to accompany him, and opened a Sunday-school for girls. A few were gathered together, and more promised to attend, which was afterwards verified, and the school was hopefully progressing. Just at this juncture, circumstances led to the accession of several teachers from the Tabernacle to the work at the Dings, and together they were enabled to enlarge the sphere of their operations. A house in Albion Place was taken. A boys' Sabbath-school was added: a week evening prayer meeting was commenced: and the accommodation for public worship was increased. Shortly after, the teachers were joined by a valuable number of fellow-labourers in the cause from Zion Chapel, Bedminster; and, thus sustained, the work of christian instruction was vigorously pursued. Another room was engaged, opposite to the spot on which the chapel now stands. Further services were instituted. The word was more frequently spoken; and indications were not wanting of the Divine presence and blessing.

During the progress of these proceedings, and amidst the openings for usefulness with which the friends of religion were now surrounded, they had perceived the desirableness of erecting a sanctuary for God, and had long felt indeed the necessity of taking measures towards such a provision. Several zealous and liberal benefactors also expressed an interest in the object, and promised their help. One of these, an aged christian living in the vicinity, offered twenty pounds towards the building of a chapel. Our friend, his brothers, and others, united in the design; and ultimately it was crowned with success. An eligible site of

ground in the Kingsland Road offered itself, which was secured. The foundation-stone was laid. The structure gradually rose to completion : and on the 1st of December, 1836, it was opened, the first sermon being preached by that devoted missionary, John Williams, on his visit to this country, just before he embarked for the South Seas, alas ! to return to his native land no more. Its cost was upwards of a thousand pounds, which, by the liberal benefactions of its friends, was soon supplied. The opening and subsequent services were well attended, and the gospel was now regularly and faithfully preached within its walls. The two Sabbath-schools, moreover, were united, and furnished nearly three hundred children, with between thirty and forty teachers, to prosecute the work of instruction in connection with it.

Among the teachers from Zion Chapel who had devoted their labours to this interesting cause, were several who were in the habit of engaging occasionally as village preachers of the Bristol Itinerant Society, and were thus usefully employed. Three of these afterwards became ministers of the gospel. One of them, the Rev. T. E. THORESBY, now the esteemed minister of Spa Fields Chapel, London, was connected with the Dings almost from the beginning. In one of the rooms occupied for Divine service he ventured first to speak in his great Master's name, and to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Subsequently, after the chapel was opened, he was prevailed upon to preach within its walls : and such was the impression produced by his services, that it was soon suggested that he would be a suitable person for the future pastorate. The matter was affectionately and earnestly submitted to his

attention ; but his mind was at that time intent on a nobler occupation still. The Missionary work was the object of his desire, and he longed for nothing so much as to go to China's distant shores, and there proclaim to perishing millions "the unsearchable riches of Christ." This purpose he fondly cherished for a considerable time. His services were in the meanwhile continued, for the most part in the chapel at the Dings : and it was not till the end of twelve months, and only when medical men had assured him that his constitution was unfit for the climate of China, that he consented to become the minister of the congregation. For this he sought to prepare himself by diligent meditation and prayer ; and, having accepted the invitation, he entered on his work amidst pleasing and auspicious tokens. A christian society was formed, consisting of six members, most of them previously belonging to the city churches. By the blessing of God on the preaching of his truth, the number soon increased, and many were added to its fellowship. Works of faith, and labours of love, ensued. Tract distribution was regularly organized. Eight hundred families were brought under visitation. An infant-school was commenced. A new room, and a master's house were built, at a cost of about £700. This was succeeded by British schools, at an expenditure of about six hundred more. Galleries were added to the chapel, to accommodate the increasing attendance. Cottage prayer meetings were held in various places, both on week day evenings, and on Sabbath afternoons. Outdoor preaching was resorted to on the evening of the Lord's day : and the result of all these combined agencies was, that in 1845, when in the providence of God Mr. Thoresby

was removed to London, the church numbered above two hundred members, with a large and increasing congregation, and four hundred children under daily and Sabbath instruction. Those who had been privileged to observe the various labours employed in this infant cause, and to watch its onward course, witnessed with delight its growing prosperity ; and could but with admiring gratitude exclaim, "What has God wrought?"

The removal of Mr. Thoresby to Spa Fields, and about the same time of two or three active workers in the church through the failure of a large firm which employed many of the people, had a depressing influence upon the cause. For some time the flock remained destitute of a pastor : and when the Rev. G. C. YOUNG, B.A., was settled over it in 1847, the number of members in fellowship was much reduced, and the general aspect of things was far less hopeful. By the Saviour's smiles, however, on his devoted labours, a considerable improvement soon became visible, and signs of renewed progress every where appeared. But in a short time the rapid decline of his health compelled him to resign, and he was obliged to quit this sphere. His partial restoration, visit to America, and subsequent connection with the Turkish Mission Aid Society, are known to all who have observed the affairs of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the efforts for its promotion in the East. He has now gone to his rest and his reward ; and his works do follow him.

Heavier losses still than any it had yet sustained were to be experienced by the church in the Dings. The deep anxiety occasioned by the above circumstances, and a declining state of health, induced in part thereby, led to

the removal of its principal friend from his native city: and others, who had been useful instruments with him in the work—amongst whom must be especially mentioned Messrs. Foster and James—were in the providence of God transferred to other parts of His vineyard. This for a while materially affected the interests of Zion, and taught its friends the lesson of their dependence upon the great Lord of all, for help and succour in every time of need. After a considerable interval, He, who had removed previous pastors, and valued brethren, from among them, was graciously pleased to direct to them their present useful minister, the Rev. J. A. PRATT, who entered on his stated engagements on the 30th of March, 1851, and whose labours hitherto have been largely blessed. The church at the present time (1859) numbers more members in fellowship than it has had at any previous period, and never were more visible and cheering tokens of the Divine favour enjoyed. The congregation is good. The Schools are flourishing: and not a few are being gathered from month to month into the fold of the chief Shepherd. Long, it is hoped, will this prosperous state of things continue, and the gospel prove in this populous neighbourhood, “the power of God unto salvation.”

One result of the establishment of this interesting cause remains yet to be noticed. Shortly before Kingsland Chapel was opened, the “Great Western Cotton Works” came into operation, and led to the formation of a new suburb about half a mile from the Dings, immediately around the Factory. During Mr. Thoresby’s pastorate, efforts were made for the spiritual benefit of this locality, and a new chapel was built at Barton Hill, at a cost of

about £800. A branch church was formed : and by the munificence of a gentleman, who, with his lady, formerly laboured as Sunday-school teachers at the Cotton Works, a Missionary has for some time been supported, whose whole time is given to that neighbourhood, and with considerable success. The attendance is encouraging ; and much good continues to be accomplished. Additional assistance being still needed in this sphere of labour, during Mr. Young's ministry another agency was commenced by the establishment of the "Dings Mission." This also has been well sustained, and many have had reason to bless God for the faithful efforts of the missionaries who, one after another, have laboured among them.

Thus has "the day of small things" opened, and increased, and shed its light around. It was not "despised" at the beginning ; and God has graciously owned it, and crowned it with His blessing, agreeably to the promise made to the Messiah ; "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power ; in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth."

"My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."



Ministers.

OPENED, 1836.

Thoresby 1838 to 1845.

Young 1847.

Pratt 1851.



CHAPTER XV.

HIGHBURY CHAPEL, COTHAM.

"The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church."

ST. MICHAEL'S HILL.—MARTYRS.—APPROPRIATE MONUMENT.—THE SUBURBS OF BRISTOL.—GROUND GIVEN.—CHAPEL BUILT.—OPENING.—CHURCH FORMED.—VARIOUS SUPPLIES.—DAVID THOMAS, B.A.—THE MARTYRS' TABLETS.—DURDHAM DOWN.—SALMON STREET.

THIS well-known aphorism never probably received a more literal and interesting fulfilment than in the circumstances of the above-named chapel, in reference to the locality in which it stands. In the gloomy days of superstition, and the triumphs of the Papal power, in the reign of Queen Mary, the summit of St. Michael's Hill, Bristol, was the scene of some of the darkest deeds of persecution. Upon it the stake was driven, and the fires of martyrdom were kindled, as if by their light to show to the surrounding country, and to successive generations, what Popish ascendancy would do. On the very spot on which the house of prayer now stands, five honoured martyrs were consumed in the flames, three centuries ago, for the love which they

bore to the name of Christ, and their faithful adherence to His truth and cause. All honour be to their memory ; and let not the lapse of time efface it. This sanctuary of God enshrines their dust. The cause for which they suffered has prevailed. And now, on the site over which their ashes were strewed, assembles a congregation of believers in the same Lord, and lovers of the same truth, for which they loved not their lives even unto death, and of which they made a good confession before many witnesses.

It was a happy day when God put it into the hearts of His servants to erect an edifice for His glory on such a spot as this, and to consecrate the ground by the best "Martyrs' Monument" that human hands could rear, an edifice in which the God of martyrs should be honoured, and the truth for which they suffered proclaimed. Besides which, the locality itself, a place where four ways meet, its elevation, and its convenience for adjacent numbers, rendered it an eminently suitable and desirable position for a structure to which the tribes might go up, "the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord."

Arising out of the increase of wealth and population in the city of Bristol, which naturally tended to enlarge its suburbs, and occupy its beautiful hill scenery on the west, it was soon found that a lack of spiritual provision existed, and that more places were required in which the ordinances of religion might be dispensed and enjoyed. This want the Dissenters in Bristol have done their part, in good measure, to supply. And in faith and hope that the Lord would "build the house," and afterwards give His blessing, it was resolved by some of them, in the year 1842, to lay the

foundation, and to erect the above-named edifice on the eligible site on which it now stands.

The foundation stone was accordingly laid, amidst the hopes and prayers of a large concourse of people, on Monday, the 3rd of October, 1842, by Richard Ash, Esq., who had generously given the ground on which the Chapel stands. On that occasion the Rev. Messrs. Roper, Haynes, Lucy, Glanville, and Jack, took part in the usual services. The stone was prepared and adjusted in the customary manner, and within its cavity a brass plate, with the following inscription was enclosed :—

“TO THE TRIUNE GOD,
This Stone,

The Foundation of a House consecrated to His worship,
Was laid on the 3rd day of October, 1842.

(Trustees' names, 15 in number.)

Here, whilst this Edifice shall stand,
May the pure doctrines of the Cross be faithfully preached
With the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

After having deposited it in its appointed place, Mr. Ash gave an appropriate address, and the whole was concluded with prayer and praise.

The building gradually advanced towards perfection. Two gentlemen of distinguished activity in the christian cause, and to whose liberality in other instances we have before had occasion to refer, joined in the enterprise here also, and generously contributed to the erection, as well as added by their own gift a considerable space to the land. By their donations, and those of others, the whole cost of the undertaking, which amounted to nearly three thousand pounds, was soon met, and on the day of opening was

entirely discharged. The chapel is an exceedingly neat structure, capable of accommodating between six and seven hundred persons. Its style is of the simple Gothic order. The pulpit is of stone. It is uniformly seated with pews without doors. There is a school-room, or large vestry, and a smaller one for the minister: the whole forming a commodious edifice, adapted to its great design.

The opening of this new sanctuary, and its dedication to the worship of the living God, took place on Thursday, the 6th of July, 1843, in the presence of a numerous auditory. Many ministers, and friends of the different churches in Bristol, were present on the occasion, to unite their sympathies and supplications to the "Lord of all" for His benediction. In the morning service the Scriptures were read, and prayers offered, by the Rev. Messrs. Wood, Glanville, Lucy, and Roper; and the venerable William Jay, of Bath, preached an impressive sermon from the vision of "the multitude round about the throne, and the Lamb," as recorded in Rev. v. 11, 12. In the evening the Rev. James Parsons, of York, addressed a crowded assembly from the last clause of the 13th verse in the 6th chapter of Isaiah: "The holy seed shall be the substance thereof;" a beautiful confirmation of the germinant and productive energy of the "seed" of the Martyrs' blood which had once been shed there, as well as of that which constitutes the essence and glory of the church of God in every age.

In a short period after the opening of the chapel, it was found necessary and desirable to constitute a christian church for the future enjoyment of a stated ministry and its privileges. This was done on the 29th of July, in the same year, by the union of twenty-one individuals in

sacred fellowship, who had chiefly belonged to other churches in the city, but now, as residents in that vicinity, gave themselves to each other by mutual agreement, and to the Lord in a renewed act of consecration, as a separate christian society, to worship within those walls: the late Rev. Dr. Henderson, of London, being present, as their preacher at the time, and presiding on the occasion. At this season, and for about a year afterwards, the pulpit was supplied by the occasional services of various ministers, who either resided in Bristol, or visited it for that purpose, and whose ministrations were both acceptable and useful among the people.

But the little flock, which had gradually increased during the year, were not left long "as sheep without a shepherd," for in July, 1844, just twelve-months after the opening of the chapel, they were happily directed to the Rev. DAVID THOMAS, B.A., to be their first pastor, whom they cordially invited to take the oversight of them in the Lord. Mr. Thomas was well-known to many of them. He had formerly been a student at Highbury College, and at Glasgow. For six years, as we have previously recorded, he had occupied the pulpit of Zion Chapel, Bedminster, and had left it simply on account of declining health, which incapacitated him for the discharge of ministerial duties. God, however, had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on others. By travel and recreation his health had improved. He returned from a voyage to Madeira, and other parts, much strengthened and invigorated, just at the time when the people at Highbury Chapel were in need of such a minister. After a few Sabbaths' successive services among them, he was unanimously invited to accept the pastorate. The

invitation was accepted by him ; and in the month of August, he entered on his stated labours among them. From that time to this he has been graciously sustained and strengthened in his work. The congregation has greatly enlarged. The church has gradually increased. God has given testimony to the word of His grace, confirming it in the experience of not a few who have been gathered into the fellowship of His people : and now, where the Martyrs bled, a flourishing christian society, of above two hundred members, is walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless ; whilst their efforts for the spread of the gospel at home and abroad, sustained by the liberality of others who worship with them, are causing the truth for which the martyrs suffered to be spoken of throughout the world.

“Blest men, who stretch their willing hands,
Submissive to their Lord’s commands,
And yield their liberty and breath
To Him that lov’d their souls in death. .

“If nature at the trial shake,
And from the cross and flames draw back,
Grace can its feeble courage raise,
And turn its trembling into praise.”

It was so here. They sowed in tears. They reap in joy. And now their harps are tuned anew.

On entering the chapel, a neat Mural Tablet, on either side of the pulpit, meets the eye, to commemorate the martyrs of ancient and modern times : on the one side, those of the Marian persecution, above referred to : on the other, those of Madagascar, of the present century : united now in the temple above, and in grateful recollections in

this sanctuary below. The following are the inscriptions which the tablets respectively bear, and which none can peruse without emotions of reverence and love :—

“In Memory of

THE UNDERSIGNED

M A R T Y R S,

Who, during the reign of Queen MARY,
For the avowal of their Christian faith,
Were burnt to death on the ground upon which this
Chapel is erected.

WILLIAM SHAPTON,
Suffered October 17, 1555.

RICHARD SHARP,
May 17, 1557.

EDWARD SHARP,
September 8, 1556.

THOMAS HALE,
May 17, 1557.

THOMAS BANION, August 17, 1557.”

“Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that
have no more that they can do.”



“In Memory of

R A S A L A M A,

The first Christian Martyr of
MADAGASCAR,

Who was put to death on the
14th of August, 1837.

ALSO, OF

More than Forty other

NATIVE CHRISTIANS,

Who in the twelve successive years
Suffered Martyrdom.”

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will
give thee a crown of life.”

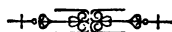
Here also the rod of Independency, or rather let us say
of christian principle, has blossomed, and its offshoots are
taking root in the neighbouring soil. An important and

populous district in the direction of DURDHAM DOWN, first excited its attention, and a desire to provide both for the adult, and the young, the means of instruction and religion, led to an effort to supply the spiritual destitution. For this purpose a piece of ground was secured, and a plan adopted for the erection of a building which should serve both for the purpose of education and of public worship. The foundation-stone was laid by the Rev. D. Thomas, in the autumn of 1849, and in 1850 it was opened for the purposes for which it was designed. It was paid for, at a cost of above a thousand pounds, by the voluntary contributions of the friends at Highbury Chapel, and was duly invested in trust for religious objects by the generous benefactors. A school for boys, and another for girls, were immediately commenced, which, with the addition of a third, since established, for infants, under the superintendence of a master. and two mistresses, and supported by the payment of the children and a supplement of annual subscriptions from Highbury, continue in efficient operation to the present time. The number of children taught in them amounts now to about two hundred. Shortly after the opening of the edifice, the best portion of it, which forms a very convenient chapel, was occupied for public worship on the morning and evening of the Lord's-day, at which times divine service is conducted, and the word of life spoken, principally by the Rev. John Burder, who has kindly undertaken the charge of the place, assisted by other disengaged ministers now residing in Bristol, all of whom gratuitously render their services. On these occasions the attendance is promising ; as also at a weekly prayer-meeting on Wednesday evening. An infant church has been formed :

and it is hoped that at some future day a self-supporting and prosperous Independent interest will be established there. Indeed the growing population of the neighbourhood even now renders it exceedingly desirable : and it is anticipated that it will ere long be practicable.

Another and recent enterprise of christian zeal from Highbury has been the erection of a small, but very neat and appropriate Mission Chapel, in SALMON STREET, KINGSDOWN, in the parish of St. Michael, where had previously been occupied a room, that to the poor in that district the gospel might be preached. This is now done stately, every Lord's-day, and on Thursday evening, by one of the City Missionaries. The building was raised at the sole charge of one of the deacons of the church at Highbury, and will seat about a hundred and thirty persons. On the 6th of January, 1859, it was opened by the Rev. D. Thomas, in a suitable sermon from I Tim. i. 15, accompanied by the fervent prayers and grateful feelings of many then assembled : and has been placed in trust for the purposes to which it was dedicated. Already the attendance has greatly increased, and has far surpassed the hopes and expectations of the founder.

Thus, from the spot on which the Martyrs bled has the Tree of Life grown, and it is now extending its branches and scattering its leaves around "for the healing" of the people.



Minister.

OPENED, 1843.

Thomas 1844

CHAPTER XVI.

WYCLIFFE CHAPEL, GUINEA STREET.

“And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.”

ORIGINALLY METHODIST.—BECOMES INDEPENDENT IN 1847.—REV.
C. BRAKE.—T. PORTER.—DEPRESSED CONDITION.—PROVI-
DENTIAL ASSISTANCE.—B. JENKYN.

To record the history of this Christian Interest from the beginning is all but impossible, and were it possible, we know not that the whole of it would be profitable. It has passed through many changes. It dates back for a considerable period ; and its early circumstances are not connected with our narrative. Suffice it to say, that for nearly a century there has been a worshipping community on this spot ; and though sometimes brought low, and at one time actually dispersed, there is at present, and has been for several years, a christian society who love “the truth as it is in Jesus,” and are walking in His ordinances.

Nearly or quite a century ago, a chapel was erected on this spot by the Wesleyan Methodists, and is said to have been one of the earliest, if not the first, built by that body of christians in the city of Bristol. John Wesley, it is affirmed, often preached in it, and, as elsewhere, the people flocked to hear him. A Methodist society was formed, which continued to assemble here till the year 1828, when the more spacious Chapel in Langton Street was opened, and the congregation removed to worship within its walls. From that time the building fell into various hands, and was occupied by different bodies of christians successively, until, in 1848, it became a regular Independent place of worship, under circumstances which appeared clearly to mark the hand of God, and were significant of His blessing.

In December, 1847, the Rev. CHARLES BRAKE, of Crown-street Chapel, Soho, London, was induced, through representations made to him of the spiritual destitution of the populous neighbourhood in which the chapel stood, to visit Bristol, for the purpose of opening it for divine worship, it having then been closed for above two years. He preached two Sabbaths: and being encouraged by the people, obtained the use of the chapel for three months, to see if prospects would justify him in leaving his charge in London, and coming to settle in Guinea Street. The result of his labours led him to entertain the thought of so doing, but circumstances arose which determined him to remain in the metropolis. At this juncture of time, the Rev. THOMAS PORTER, of Godalming, in Surrey, then about to leave his sphere, was brought into communication with Mr. Brake, and through his representations was induced to visit

Bristol. After preaching two Sabbaths to the people, in compliance with their wishes he took the chapel for one year, and secured the option of a lease for a longer period at a rental of twenty-five pounds per annum. Having been closed for two Sabbaths for repairs, painting, &c., it was opened on the 6th of April, 1848, by two sermons from the Rev. James Bennett, D.D., of London. The attendance on the occasion was good. The congregation, from that time, continuing pleasingly to increase, and, suitable persons waiting for such a privilege, a church of the Congregational order was formed on the 16th of June, in the same year, which took for its basis the word of God, as set forth in the "Assembly's Catechism," of which the Rev. Thomas Porter was recognised as the pastor.

For a few years things continued in a progressive and encouraging state, and indications were not wanting of the presence and blessing of the great Master of assemblies with His people. The pastor was useful in his work : the word was attended with power : and gratifying additions were made to the church of those who gave evidence that they had received the grace of God in truth. But in the year 1852, the health of the minister began to decline. He was obliged to retire for some months from his engagements : and before the year was closed he was numbered with the silent dead. He slept in Jesus on the 27th of November, 1852, and left a happy testimony behind that whether living or dying he was the Lord's.

The decease of their beloved pastor not only left this infant flock as sheep without a shepherd, but exposed it to discouragements and difficulties from various sources. The chief of these related to their temporal affairs, and to the

tenure by which their chapel was held. In trying circumstances recourse was had to christian brethren in the city, who kindly helped them by their judicious counsels in time of need. The cloud, however, still darkened. The hearts of the people were depressed, and they feared the loss of the sanctuary which they loved. But their faith was strong: their hope sustained them: and their prayers continued without ceasing that God would interpose on their behalf. This He graciously did. In their extremity they made, in a printed statement, an urgent appeal to the friends of religion in Bristol for help, which was widely circulated. Happily it fell under the notice of a gentleman who had it in his power to assist them, and whose sympathies were engaged on their side. He generously and promptly afforded relief. On an evening in April, 1853, when the church was convened for special supplication before God, intelligence was brought to them that the whole matter was adjusted, their liabilities removed, and the chapel henceforward to be their own, regularly invested in trustees, for the worship of the Triune God.

This opportune and gracious deliverance filled the hearts of the people with joy. They thanked God and took courage, and now renewed their diligence, and their prayers for the enjoyment of the stated ministry and ordinances amongst them. Supplies were regularly obtained for the pulpit, and several ministers visited them who were deemed eligible for the future pastorate. Their choice ultimately fell on the Rev. BENJAMIN JENKYN, of Little Dean, in Gloucestershire, who, in January, 1854, was unanimously invited to take the oversight of them in the Lord. The invitation was accepted by him; and in the month of April,

of the same year, he entered on his stated labours. From that time to this (1859) he has continued among them, earnestly testifying "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," and not without encouraging tokens of the Divine benediction. The church, the congregation, and the prayer-meeting, are all in a hopeful state, and the sabbath-school is in a flourishing condition ; each deserving to be sustained and promoted by all the friends of truth and man in that vicinity, where it is earnestly hoped, that for many years to come Wycliffe Chapel will be a prosperous cause, and a blessing to the souls of multitudes.



Ministers.

Porter..... 1848 to 1852.

Jenkyn 1854.



CHAPTER XVII.

ARLEY CHAPEL, CHELTENHAM ROAD.

"In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.—PROGRESS.—LOCALITY.—"IN THE HEART."
—GENEROUS OFFERS.—THE SITE.—PLAN.—FOUNDATION LAID.
—COMPLETION.—OPENING.—CHURCH FORMED.—FIRST PASTOR.
—REV. SAMUEL HEBDITCH.

It is one of the most gratifying signs of the times in which we live, that there is a disposition to multiply places of worship to the honour of the living God in proportion to the demands of our increasing population, and to overtake the necessities of the people as they locate in the suburban districts of our large towns and cities. All that the united energies and zeal of the people of God can do in this direction, provided that in every sanctuary His worship be purely performed, and His gospel be faithfully preached, will not be too much, if sufficient, to provide the means of grace for the destitute, or roll back the tide of impiety and ungodliness which would otherwise be likely to overflow

our land. We hail, therefore, with gratitude and praise, every effort made to occupy the moral wastes around us, and to build a temple for the Lord of Hosts, where, if left undone, no adequate provision would be made, no joyful sound of salvation would be heard, and no “sweet incense” of spiritual worship arise, through the One Mediator, to the throne of the Eternal.

The last act of this kind in Bristol, and which in these pages we have to record, is one of the most interesting, and, through God’s blessing, successful of all ; and bids fair to hold out a lasting encouragement to all the lovers of truth, and of their country, to “go and do likewise.”

Many years have now elapsed since it entered into the heart of some christian individuals residing in the neighbourhood to build a house for God in this vicinity. They saw the tendency of the city to enlarge in this direction, and the inclination of the people to erect habitations on either side of the valley in which Arley Chapel now stands. Montpellier, with its numerous streets and villas, had no house of prayer in which those who conscientiously separate from the Church of England could unite in worship, and the rapidly increasing numbers on the other side of the vale were in want of a Sanctuary to which they might repair for christian privileges in the manner to which they had been accustomed, and which, with the word of God before them, their hearts and minds preferred.

Many desires were expressed. Many purposes formed : and some frustrated : until at length the set time to favour Zion came, and some of her friends, in faith and prayer, said, “The God of heaven, He will prosper us, therefore we His servants will arise and build.”

Amongst this number, there was one who for many years had been a worshipper and communicant at the Tabernacle, whom God had prospered in his temporal concerns, and whose lot was now fixed in this locality, who possessed by lease a large portion of ground in the neighbourhood, and who had purposed in his heart to set apart a site for a christian sanctuary whenever the time for its erection should arrive. This resolution was made known to a few other individuals, who saw the desirableness of such an object, and appreciated, as it deserved, so benevolent a proposal. For some time the offer remained unaccepted, and the generous donor of the land stood almost alone in the progress of the scheme, because of the difficulty of securing an adequate sum for the erection of a chapel suitable to such a locality. But, most providentially, as two christian gentlemen were driving that way on a summer's morning in 1853, the one informed the other, as he pointed to the eligible spot, of the generous offer which had been made. That "other" was a benevolent friend, whom God had blessed with the means to accomplish whatever his heart desired, and who had before proved, as this volume testifies, a liberal benefactor in the time of need, and in purposes of usefulness, to many. He returned home to reflect, and, as he afterwards said, "to make it the matter of prayer." A short time after, he stated to his friend that "he was willing to give a thousand pounds to the object, provided another thousand could be raised by a given time." This was communicated to other friends. An impulse was given. A new interest was awakened. Some objected; but more concurred. One liberal benefactor who had promised £200, increased it to £500. Others gave their £100, £50, £20, or £10, and

thus, in due time, after much patience, many hopes, and many prayers, sufficient was promised to justify the commencement of the work, and the adoption of a plan by which the future structure should be reared.

The site of ground on which Arley Chapel now stands is probably the most eligible that could be found in the whole neighbourhood. It forms, like the point of an arrow, the angle at which the principal road from the city towards the north-west diverges into two: the one, the Cheltenham, and direct road into Gloucestershire; the other, the old Lampblack Hill (now called Arley Hill), which was, and still is, the main thoroughfare to Redland and the Downs, and to the Passage across the Severn into Wales. Other roads also meet in the vicinity. On either side rises the beautiful hill which was once verdant with pasture, or waving with corn, now decked with villas, and covered with houses and gardens, as far as the eye can extend. In the centre of the vale, between the two roads, and ere the busy haunts of men are quite exchanged for the stillness of the rural scene, rise the portico and turret of the Chapel, "to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord."

The plan agreed upon, and by which the edifice has been erected, is somewhat of the Italian order, of a crucifix form, and peculiarly adapted to the position of the ground on which it stands. The entrance is at the front. The pulpit is at the opposite end: with a recess, and organ behind. A vestry for the minister, and a spacious school-room, in which the weekly services are held, complete the provision made. The chapel, commodiously pewed in every part,

with a small gallery in front, and every convenience that can be desired, will seat about six hundred persons. The cost of the whole, which is now quite defrayed, being above four thousand pounds.

All things being prepared, and a goodly number of ministers, deacons, and people, being assembled together to witness the gratifying scene, the foundation-stone of this edifice was laid on a verdant morning in the spring of 1854, and not few were the pious hopes indulged, and the ardent wishes expressed on the occasion. After the homage of praise to the supreme Architect, Mr. Joseph Foster stated the circumstances in which they were convened, and were now proceeding to such a work. Richard Ash, Esq., a principal donor to the design, then addressed the assembly, and in due order deposited the corner-stone, in the cavity of which the following inscription was enclosed :—

“TO THE TRIUNE JEHOVAH,

This Chapel is dedicated as a house for His worship,

The foundation-stone of which was laid by

RICHARD ASH, Esq.,

On the twenty-second day of May, A.D. 1854.

The Building-Committee were

CHRISTOPHER GODWIN (Chairman), HENRY WILLIAMS,

RICHARD ROWE, EDWARD T. INSKIP,

JOSEPH FOSTER, WILLIAM WILLIAMS, J. TITLEY.

The ground was the donation of

WILLIAM WILLIAMS, Esq.

Here may the pure doctrines of the Cross
be faithfully preached, under the abiding
unction of the Holy Ghost, whilst this
Edifice shall last ; and multitudes of
immortal souls be led to a saving knowledge
of a crucified Redeemer.”

A hymn was then sung. The Rev. John Burder, M.A., delivered an address on the principles and influence of Dissent: the Doxology followed: and the Rev. Thomas Winter, of Counterslip, concluded with prayer.

The work proceeded. The structure rose. And before fourteen months had passed away, this "holy and beautiful house" was completed, and fit for occupation. A smiling morning in summer ushered in the appointed day; and on the 20th of June, 1855, multitudes were assembled at its first service to dedicate the house to the worship and glory of the "Lord of all." The first prayer was uttered by the Rev. Mr. La Trobe, the minister of the Moravian Chapel, in Bristol. After united praise, Mr. Lucy, of Lodge Street, read the scriptures; and the Rev. G. Wood, B.A., of Zion Chapel, offered the dedicatory prayer. A hymn having again been sung, the Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, ascended the pulpit, and preached an eloquent and instructive sermon from I. Corinthians ii. 2. "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." In the evening, the Rev. John Stoughton, of Kensington, London, delivered to a large congregation another appropriate discourse; and thanksgiving and supplication, with the apostolic benediction, closed the day. Thus was opened and consecrated by spiritual worship, and amid many hopeful tokens of the Divine presence, this goodly sanctuary to the honour of the Triune God.

All, however, was not done. The erection of a material building to the name of the Lord of Hosts is but subsidiary and secondary to that which is its main design and ultimate end, viz., the gathering of living stones, to be "builded together for a habitation of God through the

Spirit," and the offering of spiritual sacrifices within its walls. This now occupied the anxious attention and prayers of the friends of Zion in this place: but it was agreed, on the whole, to postpone the formation of a church till, in the providence of God, a suitable minister should be found to occupy this important sphere of his vineyard. For some months the pulpit was supplied by various ministers with this in view, and more than one was thought both eligible and desirable. But no one seemed to concentrate the desires and wishes of the people so much as the Rev. SAMUEL HEBDITCH, then of Woolwich, where he had been labouring about two years, and previously settled at Ashburton, in Devonshire. To him the attention and regards of the congregation were directed; and, after spending some successive Sabbaths among them, he was requested to become their minister. On the 28th of November, 1855, a special meeting was held for the formation of a christian church, and after united prayer, in the presence of several ministers, and of Him who "walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," twenty-nine individuals gave themselves afresh to the Lord, and then to each other, to walk together in His ordinances, and in the fellowship of the gospel, in connection with Arley Chapel. They had been, for the most part, members of other christian societies. A declaration, embodying the principles of their faith and order, was signed unanimously by them. The Rev. John Burder presided on the occasion, and addressed them on their privileges and obligations. The Rev. R. E. May, and the Rev. E. J. Hartland, offered prayer: and the first act of the newly-formed society was to confirm and repeat the invitation to the Rev. S. Hebditch to become their pastor.

Mr. H. was present on the occasion: and, in an appropriate reply, expressed his acceptance of their call, and his willingness to labour among them in the Lord.

On the first Sabbath in the new year, 1856, the church, with its pastor, and newly-chosen deacons, sat down together, for the first time, around the table of Redeeming love, and there recognised and cemented the bonds of christian union into which they had recently entered. From that time to this (December, 1859), their numbers have been gradually increasing. The congregation on the Lord's-day has assumed a numerous and settled appearance. A Sabbath-school has been formed. Other institutions of an evangelical and auxiliary kind have been originated, and are now in useful operation. The word preached has been accompanied with a blessing, there is reason to hope, in the experience of not a few. And the Lord has added unto the church such as shall be saved.

Such was the origin, and such has been the progress hitherto, of the cause of Christ at Arley Chapel.

“Thus saith the Lord, I will open fountains in the midst of the vallies.”

“And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ‘Ye are not my people,’ there shall they be called the children of the living God.”



Ministers.

OPENED, 1855.

Hebditch 1855.



CHAPTER XVIII.

WELSH INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, LOWER CASTLE STREET.

"We are all one in Christ Jesus."

RELATION. — INDEPENDENTS OF WALES. — WELSH IN BRISTOL. —
THEIR CLAIMS. — FIRST EFFORTS. — BAKERS' HALL. — MR. H.
HERBERT. — CHAPEL IN LOWER CASTLE STREET. — MR. JAMES.
— DESTITUTION. — REV. J. JONES.

WE have "a little sister" within our gates, from the Principality, whose circumstances claim our brief attention, and whose prosperity will receive, as it demands, the cordial wishes and earnest prayers of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ; especially of the friends of our Congregational Zion.

The Independents of Wales are a numerous and highly respectable body of our fellow-christians in that interesting land. They constitute a large portion of the living and active church of Christ amidst the mountains and valleys of their native soil ; and have been greatly honoured of God,

in late years, for the diffusion of His truth, and the ingathering of souls to the fold of the Good Shepherd. Many blessed seasons of revival have they been favoured to enjoy, and, in union with others of similar faith and hope, if not of exactly the same order, have done much for the spread of "pure and undefiled religion" in their borders. The names of some of their ministers are well known among us; and we cannot wish a greater blessing to Wales than that through every generation of time there may be raised up to sound the gospel trumpet, men of kindred spirit and talent to those who now, both among the Calvinistic Methodists, and Independents, proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to their countrymen in their own native tongue.

It is natural to suppose that to a city so adjacent to the Principality as is Bristol, with which the facilities of intercourse are so numerous both by sea and land, and between which and the towns of Wales commercial dealings are so extensive, many of the Welsh would find their way for employment and support, or by the connections of families, and thus become residents in our locality. This is found to be the case to a large extent, at least to the amount of several thousands. Those who occupy the middle and higher walks of life, are usually as well acquainted with the English language as their own. But there is a large number of those who, on coming, know nothing but their native tongue, and retain it, both from habit and preference, for many years. For these it was desirable that spiritual provision should be made, and that they should not be left destitute of the bread of life. Happily the want has in a good degree been supplied; and three chapels now exist in Bristol in which the gospel of Jesus is proclaimed, and worship

conducted, in the Welsh tongue: viz, the Calvinistic Methodist, the Baptist, and the one to which this notice refers.

About the year 1820 it was found that there were several families of Welsh Independents settled in Bristol, who naturally wished to enjoy priveleges similar to those to which they had been accustomed, in their native land, and not to be alienated from the faith and order they conscientiously preferred. Their number was known to be increasing. Accordingly, in consonance with advice given them by Independent brethren in the city, they met together for prayer and praise, and to hear the word of exhortation as often as it could be spoken among them. They assembled for worship at first in Bakers' Hall, Merchant Street; and a christian church was regularly formed, consisting in the beginning of eighteen members. For a short time they were supplied by various ministers from the Principality, who were either occasionally in Bristol, or came over for that purpose. In the month of August, 1821, Mr. HERBERT HERBERT, one of the students of the late Dr. Lewis, of Llanfylllyn, after spending some Sabbaths with them, was invited to the pastoral office over them, and was ordained to it in Bakers' Hall. The place becoming too strait for them, a small but convenient chapel was erected in Lower Castle Street, which was opened on the 8th of January, 1823, when two sermons were delivered on the occasion, one by the Rev. S. Lowell, of Bridge Street, and the other by the Rev. W. Thorp, of Castle Green—the former from Psalm cxxii. 1, the latter from Hebrews xii. 2; other ministers of the city engaging in the devotional exercises. After four years of labour,

amidst various circumstances, Mr. Herbert saw it proper to remove ; and in 1825 he resigned his charge.

In their destitute condition the little flock looked to their native land for a supply, and sought help from the Academy at Newtown, in North Wales. The Rev. Mr. Davies, the tutor, sent them an excellent young man in the person of Mr. EVAN JAMES, who, after some months of service among them, was unanimously invited to become their pastor. He arrived in Bristol in September, 1825 ; and on the 30th of May, 1826, was ordained over them to the work of the Lord : the Rev. Messrs. Leifchild and Wooldridge, of Bristol ; Jeula, of Greenwich ; Phillips, of Bethlehem, in Wales ; and other ministers, being engaged in the services of the day. Very auspicious was the commencement of Mr. James's ministry, and very useful its exercise, till, in 1830, he received an invitation to the Congregational Church at Bridgewater, and felt it his duty to comply. He was much beloved by the people ; and his removal occasioned great regret among them.

From that time ministerial services in the Welsh language became somewhat uncertain and irregular. The people were obliged to obtain supplies as best they could ; and these continued with them for a longer or shorter space, as circumstances required or justified. Frequently have they been destitute, and their hearts discouraged within them, from the want of pastoral superintendence ; but they were enabled as a church to keep together, and to wait on the Lord continually. He at length has heard their prayer ; and now they enjoy, in their native tongue, the ministrations of the Rev. JOSEPH JONES, from Sardis, in Montgomeryshire, a young minister of genuine piety and talent,

whose heart is devoted to his work, and who loves to proclaim to his countrymen, in their own language, "the wonderful works of God."

This little cause has a special claim upon the sympathies and prayers of the Independent ministers and churches of the city, inasmuch as from it, after they have acquired the English tongue, many, in succession, are dismissed to their communion, or are led by circumstances to attend the worship of God in some of their sanctuaries.

May this little hill of Zion prosper.

"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Lord."



Ministers.

OPENED, 1823.

Herbert..... 1821 to 1825.
James..... 1825 to 1830.
Jones 1857.



CHAPTER XIX.

LONG ASHTON.

**"Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure
to give you the kingdom."**

THE VILLAGE.—CIRCUMSTANCES.—MR. AND MRS. WEARE.—MISS
HODGES.—REV. J. HOSKINS.—THE INTERVIEW.—SERMON AT
CASTLE GREEN.—DOMESTIC WORSHIP.—DREAM.—ITS RESULTS.
—PREACHING.—CHAPEL BUILT.—OPENED.—SUPPLIES.—REV.
S. BROWN.—REV. J. HYATT.

WHAT "Emmaus" was to Jerusalem, and what "Bethlehem Ephratah" was among the thousands of Judah, is the village of Long Ashton to Bristol; and the flock of Christ assembling in the Independent Chapel there to the tribes of our Israel in this city. To it, more than two have often walked together in sweet communion: and from it, has a tribute of praise arisen to Him "whose goings forth are from everlasting."

The introduction of the gospel into this village was attended with such peculiar circumstances, and so intimately connected with one of the principal churches in the city,

that we deem it right to give it a place here, and to record, for the instruction and encouragement of others, another instance of what individual effort can accomplish in furthering the cause of men's salvation.

There lived in a beautiful house, on the right hand of the main road through the village, embosomed among its trees, and on the slope of the rising ground which forms the romantic scenery of the neighbourhood, a good old English gentleman of the name of John Fisher Weare, Esq., who, with his lady, and a few domestics, formed an establishment in the locality which many will long remember with esteem and gratitude. That individual and his wife were, at the commencement of their domestic history, and for some time in its progress, strangers to the power of religion, and living "without God in the world," lovers of pleasure more than lovers of Him. But it pleased that gracious Being, whom they had forgotten, to bring them to a knowledge of Himself; and by a train of well-adapted, and somewhat interesting circumstances, to shew them "the good and the right way," in which alone true happiness can be found, and by which the interests of both worlds are secured.

At about the middle period of their lives, the guidance of an invisible Hand directed into their family a young person of excellent character and true piety, partly to assist in domestic affairs, and partly, as it afterwards proved, to be the companion of her mistress in her habitation. That young person, whose name was Elizabeth Hodges, was in the habit of walking into Bristol on the Lord's-day to hear the word of life, and attend, as often as she could, on the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Hoskins, of Castle Green. Having heard the word to profit, and received the grace of

God in truth, she expressed to her Minister her desire to remember her Lord's command, and to communicate with His people at the table of redeeming love. The good man, more than once, conversed with her, and was abundantly satisfied of her fitness to be received into the fellowship of the church of God ; but observed to her, that he "always liked to hear of the character which candidates for church communion bore in the family in which they lived," and should call some morning on Mrs. Weare, of Long Ashton, with that in view. The visit was accordingly paid. An interview was willingly granted ; and in reply to a few relevant inquiries the lady stated that "she had no complaint whatever to make of her servant, but that she was in all respects what she could wish, except that she was such a Methodist, and had rather too much religion to please her."

Mr. Hoskins returned his thanks for her kindness, and for the honourable testimony she had borne to her domestic's character, observing, "it was all he could wish for, and quite satisfactory for the object of his visit ;" and concluded by saying, "Happy should I be, dear madam, if you had found the same method, and partook of the same wisdom, which prompts the heart to choose that good part which shall never be taken away." The interview closed ; and soon after, Miss Hodges was received into the fellowship of the church of God at Castle Green.

After Mr. Hoskins had left the house, Mrs. Weare said to her attendant, "Who was that good man who came to me to enquire about you, and where does he preach ? There is something in his words and manner that makes me wish to hear him." A short while afterwards, she repeated the

enquiry, and added, "You know that Mr. Weare does not like for any one in the family to go anywhere but to our own Church, and how to contrive it I do not know ; but I should like to go."

The providence of God opened the way. A few Sabbaths after, Mr. Weare was confined to the house by indisposition : and the carriage was ordered to take Mrs. Weare and her companion to Castle Green. Mr. Hoskins was in the pulpit. His text was, "We preach Christ crucified : " and Mrs. W. listened with fixed attention, for the first time, to the great doctrines of redemption. An impression was made. On arriving at home, she said to her attendant, "I must hear that good man again." She was accordingly, soon after, within the walls of the sanctuary a second time ; and the gospel which she then heard, and which was afterwards, by various means applied, ultimately proved, in a gradual way, and by the teaching of the Spirit of God, the "savour of life" to her soul.

Soon after this, Mr. Weare was one morning passing the door of a room in which he saw his domestics assembling together, and enquired of Mrs. Weare what it meant. She replied, "your servants are assembling for the worship of God, and your house-keeper, my dear, is taking that part which properly belongs to you, as the head of the house." As the worship advanced, he concealed himself within hearing ; and as Miss Hodges conducted the service, and prayed in a very earnest and affectionate manner for her master, he became deeply interested : and his heart was impressed with the idea that "it was high time he had begun to pray for himself." This was the first step, it is stated, in his conversion to God. After some time, he was

not only able to approach in secret the Hearer of prayer, but willingly joined the devotions of his household.

These circumstances prepared the way for the introduction and support of the gospel in the village. Of this, too, Miss Hodges was in a good degree the instrument ; her desires being stimulated by an impression left upon her mind from a "vision of the night," which has been so authentically communicated, that the writer feels no hesitation in recording it, simply stating it as a fact which many know, and none can deny, and leaving it to the reader's own reflections.

She dreamt, on a certain occasion, that as she was passing down the village, near the spot on which the chapel now stands, she saw an angel standing over a high tree which grew there, with a long parchment roll in his hand, on which were inscribed the words, "The everlasting gospel." Perplexed afterwards with the dream, and wondering what it could mean, she related it, in conversation, to her pastor, and he, after a little consideration replied, "O, I see what it means. It signifies that you will have the 'everlasting gospel' in that village ; and, God willing, I will come, and preach it, at such a time." He came at the appointed period, and preached the gospel, under the tree, or near to it, as was known to all around. The Lord "gave testimony to the word of His grace." Several were pricked to the heart, and constrained to inquire, "What must we do to be saved?" Thus was the first effort blessed : and the fruits which followed indicated the work to be of God.

About this time, or a little preceding it, and probably encouraged by the above occurrences, a few friends were accustomed to meet together at the cottage of a Mr. Hall for

prayer and praise, but with no prospect of the erection of a little sanctuary for their worship, as land was scarcely attainable at any price : and they knew not whence the supply was to come. But soon the set time to favour their hopes, and gratify their wishes, was at hand. A small portion of an orchard was kindly granted on lease by Mrs. Thayer, the freehold of which was eventually purchased by Mr. Weare : and the whole of the subsequent expenses were defrayed by him. The foundation-stone was laid : the building finished : and on the 2nd of March, 1792, the Chapel was opened by the Rev. John Sibree, of Froome, and dedicated to the honour of Christ, and the worship of the living God. It was afterwards properly invested in trust “for the use of Calvinistic Dissenters, according to the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England.”

The pulpit was for many years supplied by Itinerant Preachers from Bristol, who were hospitably entertained at the house of Mr. Weare. Among these were Mr. JOHN REES, afterwards of Rodborough ; Mr. WARLOW, subsequently of Milford ; Mr. WOOLLES, of BRISTOL ; Mr. ISRAEL PASCOE ; Mr. JOHN WATERS ; and Mr. WILLIAM WESTON. Mr. Waters being called to a distant sphere, his place was filled by Mr. JOHN DAY, who preached every other Sabbath. His ministry was very acceptable. Through his instrumentality a Sunday-school was established, and in 1813 two commodious school-rooms were erected, adjoining the chapel : but in the midst of his usefulness he was cut off by consumption, in the year 1815, at the early age of 33. He was succeeded by the Rev. SAMUEL BROWN, whose ministry, through a long series of years, was a continued blessing to the place. In its earlier part, a

christian church was formed ; and in the month of August, 1826, a little company of believers sat down for the first time, in their own chapel, to commemorate the love of Him who bought them with His blood. At various times, others were added to their number ; and tokens were not wanting of the presence and blessing of the great Master of assemblies. But, in the month of March, 1857, Mr. Brown, partly from the infirmities of advancing years, and partly from other circumstances, saw it his duty to resign his charge, which he did amidst the affections and esteem of his people, and retired into Bristol.

The excellent Mrs. Weare, whose christian character was exemplary, and whose increasing efforts for the temporal and spiritual welfare of her neighbours endeared her to many, came to the grave like “a shock of corn fully ripe in its season” in June, 1834, at the advanced age of 81 ; and left a fragrant memory behind. Mr. Brown preached a funeral sermon for her (which was afterwards printed), from the words in Luke xxiii. 28,—“Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.” Mr. Weare, who was also a most benevolent and liberal minded man, had preceded her to the tomb. He closed his life, in the faith of Jesus, in the year 1816, at the age of 61 ; and both were interred in the family vault, in St. Thomas’s Church, Bristol. Miss Hodges, who survived them for a short period only, closed her devoted and useful life, about three months after Mrs. Weare, at the age of above 70 years ; and peacefully entered into the “rest which remaineth for the people of God.”

As soon as this christian society found themselves bereft of pastoral superintendence and aid, they betook themselves

to the throne of grace in prayer, and sought counsel of their friends as to what they "ought to do." In the mean while, deacons were regularly chosen, and inducted into their office. The pulpit was, for some months, supplied by various ministers residing in Bristol. In the autumn of 1857, they were happily directed to the Rev. JOSEPH HYATT, who at that time had resigned his charge in Gloucester, and was willing to spend a month with them. At the close of that period he was unanimously invited by the church and congregation to take the oversight of them in the Lord. The invitation was accepted by him. On the second Lord's-day in November, of the same year, he entered on his stated duties as their pastor, and continues to labour among them in word and doctrine to the present time, amidst tokens of the Divine presence and benediction. The congregation has improved. The Sabbath-school has increased. A growing attention has been awakened to the ministry in the neighbourhood ; and some have been added to the fellowship of the church of God, to fill up the vacant places of those who, in providence, have been removed to other places, or have gone to worship in the temple above.

Thus has the great Shepherd cared for His "little flock" at Ashton, and given them the fulfilment of His promise, "Lo ! I am with you always, even to the end."



Ministers.

OPENED, 1792.

Various.

Brown 1815.

Hyatt..... 1857



CHAPTER XX.

BRISTOL ITINERANT SOCIETY.

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.”

CHRISTIANITY AGGRESSIVE.—FORMATION OF THE INSTITUTION. —
EARLY OPERATIONS.—PROGRESS.—PRESENT SPHERE.—SUCCESS.
MANAGEMENT. — AGENTS. — CONSTITUTION. — CLAIMS. — CON-
CLUSION.

THE christian church universal is the Missionary Society of the world : and the separate communities of believers of whom it consists are to be such in the locality in which they reside. Together, or apart, they are to be as a “city set on a hill,” whose light cannot be hid, but reflected on the places below, the glens and vales around. “Christianity,” said the eloquent Dr. Chalmers, “must go forth in quest of human nature, for human nature, unpurified and uninstructed, will never go forth in quest of christianity.” This, indeed, is the very genius of the religion of Christ. It is essentially an aggressive system. And it was the injunction of its Divine Author, ere He ascended to the skies, “Go ye

into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "Beginning at Jerusalem." "Holding forth the word of life." Or, as it was with the church at Thessalonica, of which the Apostle could say—"From you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad."

Impressed with these truths, and looking with sympathy on the destitute villages and hamlets around Bristol, several of the followers of Christ, and members of the different churches in the city, nearly fifty years ago, formed themselves into a society for the spread of the gospel in its vicinity. It was a happy instance of union amongst Independent churches, and of their power to combine and co-operate for a special object, and it has furnished an example of this to the present time. The institution was formed in the year 1811. It was entitled, "The Bristol Itinerant Society," and originally consisted of the pastors, and some members of each of the four Independent churches then existing. Suitable rules were formed for its regulation: its object was "the preaching of the gospel, supporting Sunday-schools, and distribution of religious tracts, in the villages contiguous to Bristol:" and its work of instruction and evangelization immediately began.

At first the sphere of its exertions was comparatively small, and but few of the surrounding villages, most of which were then lying in a state of spiritual darkness and destitution, could be included within the range of its attention. From year to year, however, it has pleasingly progressed. A conviction of the importance of its labours has grown with its progress, and encouragements have been

annually given to advance by many tokens of the Divine approval and benediction. The great Lord of the harvest has not only sustained His servants in their work, but answered in their experience the prayer of the Apostle—“Now He that ministereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.” They felt both the ability to labour, and the supplies of christian benevolence, increase, as the opportunities of usefulness multiplied around them : and having obtained help of God, they continue in their work to the present day.

It is truly gratifying to peruse the recent reports of this institution, and to observe the extent of its operations, and the numerous instances of good which through the Divine blessing have occurred. Twenty different stations are now occupied by the society within a circle of twelve miles of Bristol, and at the greater part of these the word of life is spoken every Sabbath-day. Fifteen chapels have been built and paid for, principally by the friends of the cause in the city; and eighteen churches have been formed, which, though some of them are small, are existing in unity, and several of them in a pleasing degree of prosperity at the present time. Sabbath-schools at most of the stations are formed, and day-schools at a few. The regular hearers, at the time of the last report (February, 1859) amounted to between two and three thousand: the number of members in church-fellowship was about four hundred: and the Sabbath-school scholars above fifteen hundred. A system of visitation for tract distribution, and other purposes, is maintained, and not fewer than twelve hundred families last year received the attention of the visitors for scripture

reading, or religious conversation, as their circumstances and necessities required.

To conduct an agency so extensive and diversified, a band of faithful labourers leave Bristol every Sabbath morning in various directions for the work of the day, some to superintend the schools, others to speak unto the people in the name of the Lord. These agents are members, some of them deacons, of the different churches, and all of them approved by the committee, and by the pastors, for the work assigned to them. A few others, both as teachers and preachers, reside in the villages, and cheerfully join their brethren on the Lord's-day : and it is no small matter for satisfaction and thankfulness that amongst these fellow-workers, in all their plans and operations; the utmost degree of harmony prevails. Willingly do they sacrifice many of their privileges to convey portions to them for whom nothing is prepared ; and the great Master has blessed them in their deed. His service has been their reward. And the truth of His promise has often been verified by them, " My grace is sufficient for thee."

Besides the acting members above referred to, who arrange the plan of operations, and assign to each labourer his respective sphere, there is a general committee to superintend the whole, consisting of the pastors, and some of the principal members of the different churches. These meet as often as occasion requires : and with a treasurer, and two secretaries, form the official staff of the institution. An annual meeting is held at one of the chapels in Bristol in rotation, at which a report is read of the proceedings of the year, and the state of religion in the respective localities is noticed, with any special instances of benefit which may

have occurred. On these occasions most interesting communications are usually made. To a "Ladies' Auxiliary" moreover, conducted by its own officers and committee, and holding its annual meeting also, the treasurer is indebted for a valuable portion of pecuniary supplies.

Of all the different modes of usefulness in which the Independent churches of Bristol are employed, and which indicate both the power and capability of Independency to unite for the general good, and for the spread of the gospel in destitute neighbourhoods, there is not one more urgent in its claims, and more useful in its exertions than this of "the Bristol Itinerant Society." For forty-eight years it has now been in successful operation. With every succeeding year it has been attended with special tokens of Divine approbation. Much has been done: but much more remains to be done, in the interesting field which it occupies. Greatly do its devoted agents deserve an interest in the prayers and sanction of all who regard the spiritual condition of their fellow creatures, and by all such will their labours be appreciated and encouraged. Offering the bread of life, from Sabbath to Sabbath, to those who for the most part are "ready to perish with hunger," they ought not to be left alone, but affectionately and earnestly remembered in the supplications of the pastors and members of the churches, in their individual and social approaches to the foot of the Divine throne, and in all the different ways in which christian sympathy and love can help them in such a cause as this. A just conviction of the importance of their work, a due regard to the spiritual wants of the vast population around this great city, and a faithful recollection of the spirit and precept of Him who was given to be a

"leader and commander to the people" will not fail to secure for this interesting department of labour in His vineyard a continued and enlarged measure of sympathy, prayer, and liberality, in proportion to the number, ability, and opportunity of the Independent churches of Bristol.

The Author cannot more appropriately close these Memorials than by commending it afresh to their regard : and by offering, with fraternal affection for them, for it, and for every work of faith and labour of love in which they are employed, the prayer of the man of God of old, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children : and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us : yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it."

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. AMEN."



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